Hitler's Third Reich – Issue 14

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HITLER'S Third Reich

Volume 14
Monthly

Witness the terrible secrets of Germany's evil empire

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The Führer's private life

Deportation
Jews led to the slaughterhouse

Führer Worship
Hitler's personality cult

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HITLER'S Third Reich

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'I sometimes had the impression that the outcome of the Russian campaign depended more on Blondi than the German general staff. When she did well, Hitler would listen to his generals. Otherwise he usually ignored them.' So wrote one of Jodl's staff officers.

HITLER at home

Above all other places, Hitler chose the idyllic setting of the Obersalzberg for his home. Here, where the isolation of the mountains echoed the void within his own soul, foreign statesmen and Nazi hierarchy alike were summoned to pay court to the Führer.

Above: This rare colour photograph, not used for propaganda purposes, shows the Führer seemingly at ease with a younger guest. The unformed mind was appealing to Hitler, and the interest was reciprocated.

Left: Always the willing confidante, Eva Braun here offers advice to SS doctor Karl Brandt, the executor of Hitler's euthanasia program.

Below: Hitler leads a retinue including von Blomberg and von Schirach around Berchtesgaden. The Berghof area was continually being rebuilt and extended, but was finally laid waste by 318 British bombers on 25 April 1945. Only the teahouse survived.

HITLER'S SPIRITUAL HOME was in the mountains of southern Germany. His residence on the Obersalzberg, the Berghof, was expanded to function as a duplicate headquarters and it was to the mountain top he retreated when key decisions could be put off no longer. He originally chose the site for its proximity to the Austrian border. In the mid-20s he was still on parole, of which his public addresses were theoretically a violation. If the German authorities chose to arrest him he could easily have slipped away. From the diplomatic brinkmanship of the late 1930s to wartime grand strategy, he pondered his future against a backdrop of Wagnerian grandeur. Throughout the war he set off for the Berghof at unpredictable intervals, his entourage following at best speed. Since he reserved so many matters to himself, service chiefs and government officials from Berlin had to fly to the Obersalzberg to brief him and await his verdict.

Favoured staff or friends from the 'old days' were regularly invited to the Berghof during the war. His personal secretary Traudl Junge was flown there in the winter of 1941: 'Hitler had arrived several minutes before us and disappeared into one of the rooms. His coat and hat hung on the the hooks in the wardrobe in the hall and for the first time I realised that this was really and truly Hitler's home.'

THE MOUNTAIN PEOPLE

Members of Hitler's inner circle were called 'the mountain people', reflecting their frequent presence at the Berghof and their inside knowledge. They were not necessarily of high rank: an entourage of chauffeurs, secretaries and domestic staff, many of whom served Hitler from the early 1930s to the end. Others were senior figures: Goebbels, Goering, Himmler, and – later – Martin Bormann. What separated these individuals from other, important leaders was their knowledge of Hitler's domestic life. They knew the secret of Eva Braun.

Eva Braun was the mistress of the Berghof. Unlike the Reich Chancellery or the 'Wolf's Lair', the tables were decorated with fresh flowers. While the conference chamber and other rooms were austere, built on gigantic scale to dwarf the occupants, there were more domestic rooms too. The terrace, scene of the most familiar colour footage of Hitler and his consorts, afforded spectacular views of Salzburg, Berchtesgaden and the distant peak of the Untersberg.

Hitler's daily routine was one of studied regularity, an inflexible timetable enforced by

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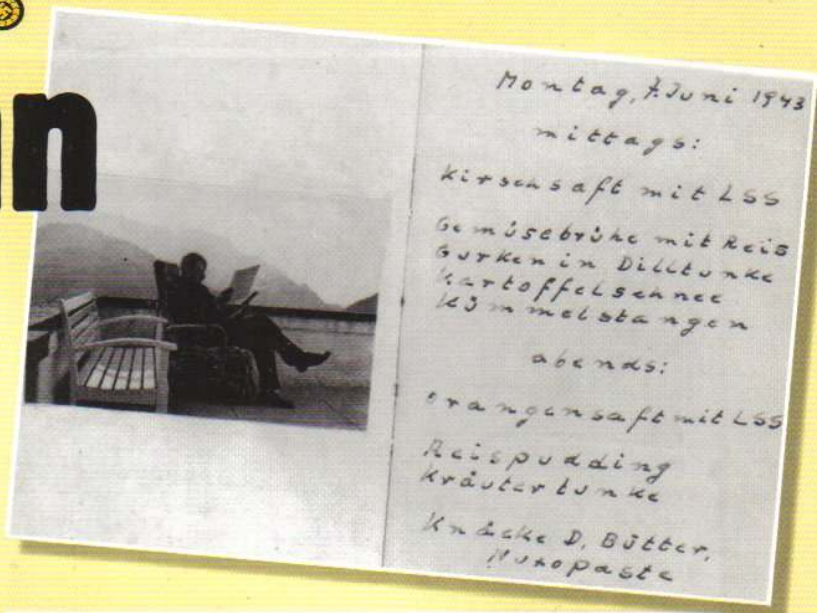
Vegetarian Diner


Montag, 7. Juni 1943
mittags:
Kirschsaft mit LSS
Gemüsebrühe mit Reis
Gurken in Dillsauce
Kartoffelschnee
Himmelstangen
abends:
Orangensaft mit LSS
Reispudding
Kräutersauce
Knäcke D, Butter,
Wurstpaste

HITLER IMPRISONED in Landsberg had put on weight. He therefore decided to cut out alcohol and meat. Then he convinced himself that both were harmful to him and in his fanatical way he went on to make a dogma out of his self-denial. Gregor Strasser complained that "He doesn't smoke, he doesn't drink, he eats almost nothing but green stuff, he doesn't touch any woman! How are we supposed to understand him to put him across to others?"

Albert Krebs was a witness to one of his tirades on vegetarianism. It was a cranky outburst and revealed Hitler to be an acute hypochondriac. Hitler explained that a variety of worrying symptoms – outbreaks of sweating, nervous tension and stomach cramps – had persuaded him to turn vegetarian. He thought he was developing stomach cancer and that he had only a few years to complete his "gigantic tasks".

Naturally the statesman's dinner guests were encouraged to share his sensory deprivations. At the Berghof, Heinz Linge served Hitler's own food – increasingly monotonous vegetarian fare such as oatmeal or linseed gruel with vegetable juices. A favourite luncheon was baked potato with cottage cheese, soaked with linseed oil. Bowls of salad arrived along the table, carnivorous guests sighing with relief at the sight of platters of sausages.

The evening meal was a typically dull German cold platter with salad. Fresh fruit and vegetables were supplied from the Obersalzberg where Bormann established the world's most expensive model garden. Its produce was flown to East Prussia when Hitler was at his military headquarters.

Top: The menu of the day for 7 June 1943. Hitler's frugality ensured that there was not even the promise of a good meal to divert the guests attention from his diatribes. Conversation at the table was in a subdued whisper, which ceased as soon as Hitler said anything. The whole atmosphere was one of deference towards the Führer, and the tension at the table was enough to cause even grey-haired generals and politicians to knock over their glasses out of nervousness when he addressed them.

Above: Amongst those waiting on the terrace for the Führer's next words are Karl Brandt, Albert Speer and Heinrich Hoffmann. It was here that the smokers gathered; Hitler forbade smoking inside the Berghof.

Left: Reich Propaganda Minister Goebbels dines with the Führer on Eintopfsonntag – 'One pot Sunday'. This was a Nazi custom designed to raise money for winter relief. Families were encouraged to eat a single-pot stew at least once a week in the winter, the money saved supposedly being contributed to charity. At the Führer's table the stew was exclusively vegetarian.

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Above: Sepp Dietrich enjoying the 'Führer weather' in the company of Heinrich Hoffmann (1885-1957). It was in his studio that Hitler met Eva Braun. Hoffmann, Hitler's constant companion was given exclusive rights to photograph him and thereby made his fortune. An example of his agency's work is shown left. Even the busiest dictator must have time off.

Above: The Obersalzberg, north-east of Berchtesgaden in south-east Bavaria was Hitler's mountain retreat from the earliest years. In 1928 he rented Haus Wachenfeld there for 100 Marks per month from a Hamburg industrialist's widow. Hitler invited his half-sister Angela Raubal to keep house, and it was there that he fell in love with the great love of his life – his niece, Geli.

Bormann in latter years. Hence the notorious incident in June 1944 when German army units in Normandy were unable to launch an immediate counter-attack because they needed Hitler's personal approval, and Bormann refused to have him woken early.

Hitler began his day at the crack of noon. Guests at the Berghof had to creep around during the morning, their silent passage along the corridors assisted by an exceptionally thick carpet. Eva Braun's Scottish terriers, Negus and Stasi, lay outside her room which had an en suite bathroom with a door into Hitler's room next door. Military officers and Nazi leaders arrived during the morning. On fine days the terrace filled with people waiting for an audience.

ENTERTAINING HOST

Hitler went into the conference room for a mid-day briefing on the military situation, a session which often lasted to 3.00 or 4.00 pm. Guests were advised to breakfast lavishly and late, as lunch did not take place until the meeting was over. His generals dismissed, Hitler would walk into the living room, kiss Eva Braun's hand and greet his luncheon guests if he had not spoken to them already. Traudl Junge was fascinated by his transformation: 'A few minutes earlier he was in serious discussion about matters that affected the whole world, but when he entered the room where his guests were assembled, he quickly forgot those concerns and became a typical good-natured host entertaining guests in his home.'

Hitler walked into lunch with a lady on his arm, selected in advance and notified by Heinz Linge, Hitler's manservant. He led her into the dining room and sat at his table facing the window. Eva Braun would be on his left and Martin Bormann on the right; Hitler's honoured guest would sit opposite. Place settings were marked with the diner's names, the arrangement often surreptitiously checked by Hitler in advance.

No-one talked shop at Hitler's table. Indeed, as news from the battlefront went from bad to worse, the more obsessive the concentration on trivia that so exasperated visiting army commanders. After an hour or so, Hitler left for his afternoon constitutional, along 'the Hitler run', a path that wound along the Obersalzberg, through some trees to a teahouse. At this point Bormann usually begged to be excused, and bustled back to his office. Sometimes followed by a selection of guests, sometimes with his dog Blondi, Hitler ambled along, usually in a trench coat with a soft peaked cap perched at an angle on his head. Blondi stayed on her leash so she could not bound off and disturb the deer.

IN THE TEA HOUSE

The teahouse was a squat ugly building, more like a farm silo, but inside its round central room had marble walls decorated with gold. Large windows gave a magnificent view; beside the huge fireplace on the other side were four high-backed chairs for Hitler and his favourites. There were another twenty or so chairs around a massive table in the middle: so broad an expanse of mahogany that conversations had to be shouted across or else the guests split into little groups either side of it. Hitler ordered caraway seed or apple peel tea to wash down his apple cake or other Viennese pastry. Guests were allowed proper tea or coffee, but were often condemned to listen to Wagner on the record player before

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> "I never have a holiday where I can go and relax, so I divided my holidays into hours which I spend with my guests here before the fireplace."
>
> **Adolf Hitler**

Hitler summoned his chauffeur to drive him back in a black Volkswagen convertible.

Hitler often nodded off in his chair at the tea house. He usually had another nap when he returned to the Berghof. His work did not resume until 7.00 pm when another round of conferences and meetings began. This delayed dinner until 9.00 pm or later.

MONUMENTAL BORE

After dinner, Hitler would return to his conference rooms and devote another hour or two to government business. After a final military briefing, Hitler would call everyone into the conference hall where he sat by the right side of the fireplace, Eva opposite. He sipped tea, but others were allowed champagne, cognac or wine. More sweet pastries circulated and Hitler came to life, talking for hours about all manner of subjects. Surviving records, made by Heinrich Heim on the intructions of Bormann, reveal Hitler as a monumental bore: this was not conversation nor argument but the ramblings of an egomaniac and uncompromising fanatic who brooked no contradiction except by a handful of intimates. One was his dentist, Hugo Blaschke, who was content to chat into the small hours. Bormann stuck it out too, always ready to seize an opportunity to get Hitler's approval for one of his pet schemes.

As sleep or boredom overtook them, the guests slipped away one by one until around 4.00 or 5.00 am. Hitler checked for any overnight news from the battlefronts, then headed upstairs. Eva usually followed after a cigarette and a mint to mask her breath.

Hitler led a semi-nocturnal lifestyle throughout adulthood. Even if he did go to sleep in the early hours, he often had his chauffeur awakened near dawn to take a drive around the mountain roads before returning to bed. His day allowed little time for effective work, broken as it was into segments sandwiched around the domestic routine. He followed the same timetable at Rastenburg, his headquarters that Jodl described as a cross between a monastery and a concentration camp. There, the afternoon walk to the teahouse was replaced by a more solitary session with Blondi; he trained the dog to perform tricks.

Hitler has been called a 'dilettante dictator'. Temperamentally, he preferred his time as an agitator, leading the struggle for power. The daily business of government bored him and he made no concessions to his personal routine when he became Chancellor. He had always kept himself isolated from the world by a small body of trusted staff: reserving his appearances to public performances. Sustained private contact with either politicians or generals would have exposed his limitations, instead, he cultivated the mystique of Der Führer.

DILETTANTE DICTATOR

Hitler fell victim to his own myth. He shunned intimate contact with his generals, party leaders or civilian personnel. Superficial chatter with his secretaries and domestic staff was his substitute for a social life. 'If Hitler had a friend,' Albert Speer suggested, 'it would be me'. His home routine was a personal void, empty of human warmth. Strangers to the regime at the Berghof remarked how the mood lightened when Hitler finally went to bed.

Top: Martin Bormann with Hitler on the Berghof roof terrace. He was the Führer's shadow and his constant presence alone made him Hitler's closest confidant.

Right centre: Baldur von Schirach, one of Hitler's frequent guests, accompanies the dictator on his regular afternoon walk.

Right: Hitler had no friends: he could relate only to children and animals. Their innocence offered him no challenge.

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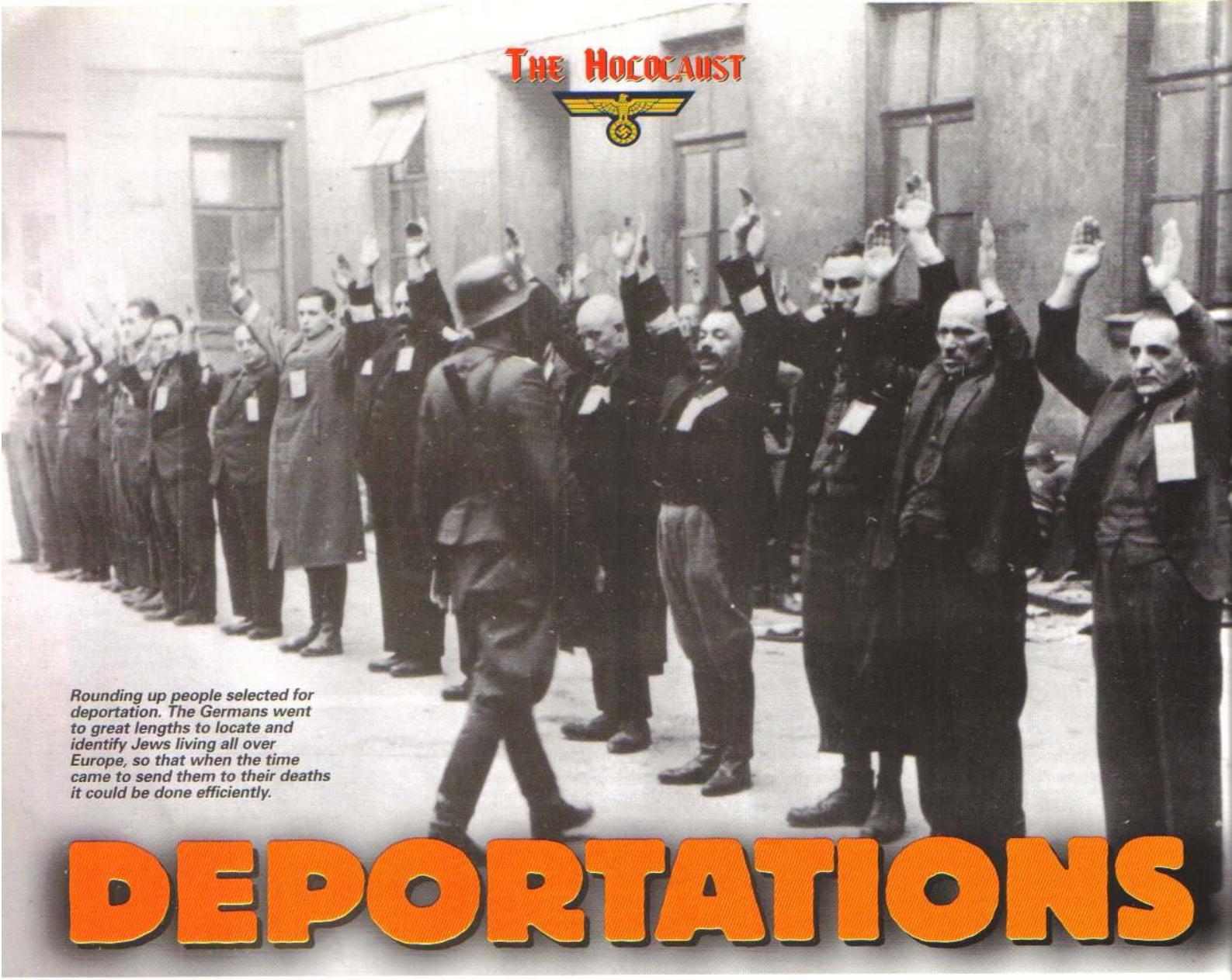

Rounding up people selected for deportation. The Germans went to great lengths to locate and identify Jews living all over Europe, so that when the time came to send them to their deaths it could be done efficiently.

DEPORTATIONS

The Nazis moved millions of Jews through Europe between 1941 and 1945. Deported from their homes, the Jews were in transit to the ghettos and death camps of the 'Final Solution'.

IT WAS THE CHILDREN who seemed most bewildered. They, and the old folk. Ousted from their homes by uniformed police officers and by SS men, they waited with their families to be shipped to a new life in the East. Partly, it was simple distress from leaving what they knew and heading into the unknown. And partly it was because of the sense of unease they could feel in the adults around. They tried to put a brave face on it, but children can often sense when their parents are worried about something.

God knows, they were owed a fresh start – life for a Jew in Germany had not been easy these last ten years. Maybe, once they were away from the control of the Nazi Party and its anti-Semitic thugs things would get better. Maybe this new place in what used to be Poland would offer hope. This place called Auschwitz.

HITLER'S HATRED

The roots of the deportation of Europe's Jews date far back into history, but the event which set in train the sequence of horrors which would become the Holocaust was the accession to power of Adolf Hitler in 1933. Hatred of the Jews was one of the central supports of Hitler's world-view. He had preached anti-Semitism from his first days in politics. His rise to power had been looked on with alarm by the more perceptive among Germany's 600,000 strong Jewish community, and in the first years of the Third Reich, many of those with the funds to do so left the country.

Even though thousands of Jews had fled, many stayed in what they believed was their country. After all, if a person spoke like a German, acted like a German, lived like a German, dressed like a German and had fought for Germany during World War I, he had every right to consider himself a German.

But not according to the Nazis. Their first step was to dismiss all Jews in public employment. In 1935, the Nuremberg Laws made anti-Semitism legal in Nazi Germany. Jews were stripped of their citizenship and forbidden to marry 'Aryans'. Jews were forbidden to use restaurants, theatres, hotels, even to sit on park benches reserved for Aryans. By 1937, all Jewish property had been registered: a year later Jewish property had

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Above: SS men interrogate Jewish inhabitants of the Warsaw ghetto as the authorities mount a mass deportation in 1942. Over the summer of that year, 300,000 people were forced out of their homes and shipped to Treblinka, where most were killed.

Right: Age meant nothing to the Germans, except in so far as the young and the old offered little prospect of use as slave labour. As a result, the proportion of the very young, the very old and the infirm amongst those selected for deportation was very high. Many would die on their way to the ghettos in the east, and those that survived only faced further deportation to the death camps of the 'Final Solution'.

been confiscated, and Jewish doctors and lawyers forbidden to practice. Jewish passports had to be stamped with the letter 'J'.

Anti-Semitism expanded with the annexation of Austria, the Sudetenland, Bohemia and Moravia. There were about 180,000 Jews in Austria, most living in Vienna. Three-quarters had emigrated by September 1939. In this they were helped by an SS-run 'Office for Jewish Emigration', established soon after the *Anschluss* and headed by a young SS officer named Adolf Eichmann.

TOO LATE TO FLEE

As the shadow of war loomed, Jews had been effectively excluded from every day German life. But there were still over 200,000 of them in Germany, and the Nazis were considering the problem of what to do next. Whichever avenue they chose to follow, the aim remained the same: a Jew-free nation.

The war cut off any possibility of further voluntary emigration. It also brought Poland's three million strong Jewish community into Nazi control. Clearly something would have to be done to solve the 'Jewish Problem' once and for all.

The first step in the Holocaust was to assemble the Jews into a few easy-to-control locations. In the east, this meant setting up or enlarging already-existing ghettos in the larger cities, and filling them with Jews from the area around. Jews would be rounded up from neighbouring villages, and from non-Jewish parts of the cities. Forced from their homes with what little they could carry, they were marched into the already overcrowded ghettos, or 'Jewish residential areas', as they were known to the Germans. Any goods and property left behind were confiscated.

POLISH GHETTOS

These initial deportations were short, often moving people within a single large city such as Warsaw or Lodz. Soon, however, the original ghetto-dwellers were to be joined by tens of thousands of Jews from much farther afield, as the Jewish populations of the occupied countries of Western Europe, Greater Germany and Germany's puppet states were rounded up and forcibly deported to the East.

For the Jews in the occupied countries, the procedure was much the same as it had been in Germany – only compressed into a shorter space of time. The first task for the authorities was to identify and locate Jews. As in Germany, civil liberties were restricted, Jews were ousted from public service employment, anti-Semitic laws were passed, property was confiscated, businesses were taken over, and Jews were restricted to specific areas of cities. From September 1941 all Jews in the Reich were required to wear a prominent Star of David, and those in other countries soon followed suit.

By this time, the Gestapo and the *Sicherheitsdienst* had access to extensive records of European Jewry. Using data from the German census of 1939, the SS used advanced card sorting machines to perform the relatively easy if time-consuming process of identifying and locating all of the Jews living in

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Germany. The 'Reich catalogue of Jews and part-Jews' was finally completed in December 1942. They had less data on Jews in other parts of Europe: while the governments of some countries, such as Vichy France, co-operated enthusiastically in the cataloguing, others – most notably Mussolini's Italy – refused to co-operate.

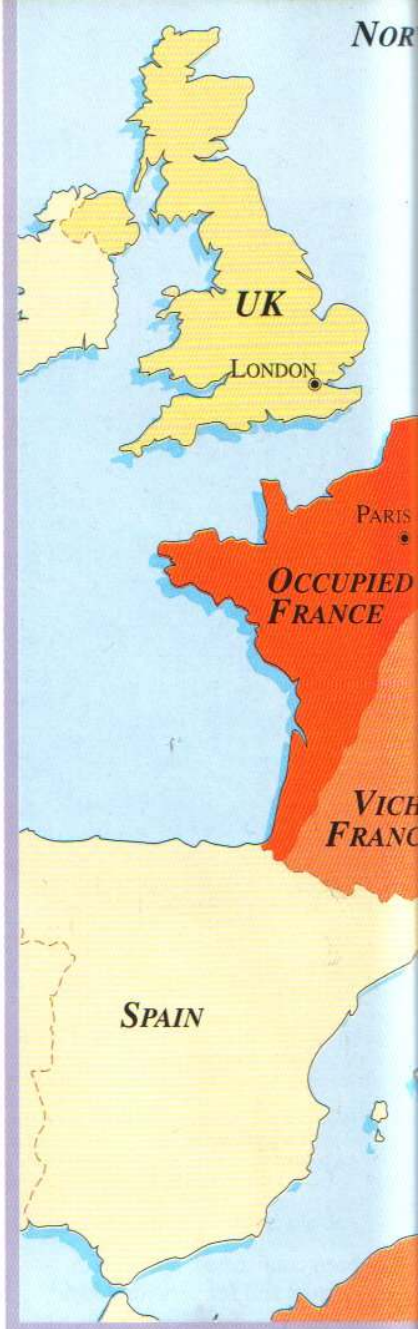
FINAL SOLUTION

The Nazi aim was a Jew-free Europe, not just Germany. Early in the process, they started moving western Jews into transit camps – concentration camps in all but name. From there, they were told, they would be resettled in the East. This may have been true at an early stage in the Nazi plan. However, by early 1942, when the first transports were already being moved across the continent, a meeting in the Berlin suburb of Wansee had settled on a more permanent solution to the Jewish problem: a 'Final' solution, in fact. The 'resettlement' in the East would not be for long. Only until the extermination camps were up and running.

Europe's extensive rail network was the key to the deportations, and to the Holocaust that followed. In the west, Jews were rounded up by

Above: Deportees and forced labourers might have been crowded into Third-class railway carriages in the early days of the programme, but it would not be long before the accommodation became even less comfortable as carriages gave way to cattle trucks.

Below: Conditions in the crowded freight cars were hellish: stifling in summer, freezing in winter, and few reached their destination without a proportion of their passengers having died.



France
Over 300,000 Jews lived in France in 1940. Deportation began in 1942. Most were rounded up by French police and sent to transit camps at Gurs and Drancy. About 75,000 of the 77,000 sent to the ghettos and death camps of Eastern Europe died.

The Netherlands
There were about 150,000 Jews in Holland in 1940. Deportations began in 1942, and by 1945 more than 100,000 had been sent via the transit camp at Westerbork to Auschwitz and Sobibor. Dutch civilians and the Dutch churches protested, but the civilian administration and the police played a full part in the deportations.

Belgium
About 25,000 out of a pre-war population of 70,000 Jews were deported from the transit camps at Breendonk and Mechelen, mostly to Auschwitz. The rounding up of Belgian Jews had to be carried out by the German *Feldgendarmerie* or military police: the Belgian people and civilian authorities did not cooperate with the Germans.

Luxembourg
2,000 of the pre-war Jewish community escaped to France during the German conquest of 1940. Most of the 2,500 remaining were deported to Lodz ghetto, Chelmno, Theresienstadt and Auschwitz. About one in ten survived the war.

DEPORTATIONS FROM THE WEST

Denmark
The Danes had been allowed to run their country without interference. The Danish administration refused to persecute the Jews. In 1943 plans were leaked that the SS intended to deport Denmark's Jews. Almost immediately, the entire Danish nation conspired to spirit the Jews out of the country. In October 1943, 7,220 were ferried across to Sweden by fishing boats, and the Germans netted less than 500 in their round up. Most were sent to Thersienstadt, and thanks to continual enquiries by the Danish government about its citizens, only 51 died in the Holocaust.

Norway
The collaborationist government of Vidkun Quisling co-operated fully with the Germans in their attempt to round up Norway's Jews. Eight hundred of the 1,900-strong pre-war community were sent to Auschwitz: the rest escaped to Sweden.

Germany
Systematic deportation of the 200,000 surviving German Jews started in September 1941. Fifty thousand were sent to the ghettos at Warsaw, Lodz, Minsk, Kovno and Riga. Most of the remaining Jews in Germany were deported direct to Auschwitz in 1942 and 1943.

Austria
Most Austrian Jews lived in Vienna. Over 100,000 had fled after the *Anschluss*. Mass deportation of the remaining 75,000 began in 1941. Thirty five thousand were sent to the ghettos in Minsk, Riga and Lodz, while 15,000 were sent to Theresienstadt.

Italy
Although Italy passed anti-Semitic laws, the Fascist government refused to co-operate with the German plans to eliminate Jews. None were deported until Italy signed an armistice with the Allies and German forces occupied the northern half of the country in 1943. Deportations began almost immediately thereafter: about 8,000 Italian Jews were deported to Auschwitz, with a further 2,000 sent from the Italian-held island of Rhodes. About 75 percent of those deported died.

Yugoslavia
Some 80,000 Jews lived in Yugoslavia at the beginning of 1941. Only about 7,000 were deported to Auschwitz: most of the 16,000 Serbian Jews were murdered on the spot, and the Croat puppet regime disposed of another 20,000 at the Jasenovac camp near Zagreb. Most of the Jews who survived were those who had fled to Italian-occupied parts of the country, who were helped by Partisans after the Italian armistice.

Greece
The old-established Jewish community in Greece numbered about 100,000 in 1941, about half living in Salonika. Most of these were deported to Auschwitz in the summer of 1943, with a further 3,000 being deported from other parts of the country in 1944.

Bulgaria
Bulgaria did not deport its own Jews during the war, but it did send those from Greek and Yugoslavian territory it had occupied. Some 7,000 were deported from Macedonia in 1943, with a further 4,000 from Thrace. Most were killed at Treblinka.

Romania
Even though it had the third largest Jewish population in Europe before the war, Romania deported very few of its 750,000 Jews. The Romanians preferred to do the killing themselves. Large numbers were deported within the country, and at least 350,000 were massacred in pogroms, starved to death, or died from epidemics.

Hungary
Like Italy, Hungary was allied to Germany but unlike the Italians the Hungarians enforced the anti-Semitic laws. However, the government of Admiral Horthy did not deport its Jews. After German forces occupied Hungary at the beginning of 1944, a more pro-German regime was established which immediately began to ghettoise the country's 800,000 Jews. This was only a temporary measure: mass deportations, organised by Adolf Eichmann, began in May 1944. Over 440,000 Jews were transported to Auschwitz in three months. Most were murdered on arrival.

Poland
More than 300,000 Jews from the Warsaw ghetto were deported to Treblinka in 1942. Seventy thousand were deported from the Lodz ghetto to Chelmno in that year: another 75,000 were transported to Auschwitz in 1944. Most other ghettos in Poland were cleared between 1942 and 1943: about 1.7 million Jews were transported and killed at Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka.

The Baltic states and Russia
Although the ghettos in towns like Minsk, Vilnius and Kaunas were the destination for many deportees, very few of their inhabitants were deported: most were killed by *Einsatzgruppen* or by Baltic or Ukrainian auxiliaries.

armed police and concentrated at assembly points or in transit camps until there were enough for a transport – usually between 1,000 and 2,000 people. The Germans went to great efforts to disguise what they were doing: the transportees were told they were being moved to labour camps, or to settle new territories in the East. They were told to bring money, warm clothes, food and any household gear that they could carry. To take the deception further, many were charged for their one-way tickets, which went some way to defraying the costs of the transport.

DEATH EXCURSIONS

In the surreal atmosphere surrounding the whole Final Solution, the SS arranged the transport by booking one-way tickets on the German national railway organisation through travel agents. The *Reichsbahn* charged the SS four pfennigs per kilometre for each individual, with children being charged at half rate. Infants and toddlers were carried free. *Reichsbahn* employees used the same forms with the SS as they used to book holidaymakers on *Kraft durch Freude* package tours. They gave discounts for volume: there was a special group rate for transports of more than 400 deportees. The SS even had to buy tickets for the *Totenkopf* guards who rode along with the transport.

Although they were booked as passengers, the Jews were transported like cattle. The journey to the Polish ghettos might take two or three days: from Greece or Holland, it could last for a week. The transportees were sealed into unheated freight cars that were stifling in summer and freezing in winter. There was little provision for food or water. If they were lucky, the transportees had a bucket for sanitation, but for most of the trip they had to sit amidst their own excreta.

In 1941 and 1942, most of the transports were used to deliver Jews to the newly established ghettos in the larger cities of what had been Poland. A few apparently lucky victims were taken to the 'model' ghetto at Theresienstadt. Originally set up to house Czech Jews, it became the destination for older German Jews, and later for deportees from Denmark and the Netherlands. But it was never more than a transit point: of the nearly 150,000 Jews sent to Theresienstadt, one in four died there, and nearly 90,000 were sent on to perish elsewhere.

Above: French deportees are marshalled in Nice railway station by Gendarmes and members of the Milice, who enthusiastically backed the Nazis. The Jews were not the only people forced by the Germans to travel across Europe: hundreds of thousands of French men were given no choice when conscripted to work as slave labourers in Germany.

SLOW TRAIN TO MURDER

From 1942, however, the transports were increasingly used to take Jews direct to the extermination camps at Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor, Majdanek, Treblinka and Auschwitz/Birkenau. Between the middle of May and 9 July 1944, at the height of the mass slaughter of Hungary's Jews, the rail system was stretched almost to breaking point as 147 trains took over 430,000 victims to Auschwitz.

1942 also saw the start of the liquidation of the ghettos, as their inhabitants were rounded up and taken away to be slaughtered. In some, it took place piecemeal. Where the Germans made the selection, they first took the elderly, the sick or those who had no economic value. In other ghettos, the Germans simply told the local Jewish council to prepare a certain number of people for transport. Any resistance meant that the council would be deported as well. On other occasions, the deportations were mass operations. When the Warsaw ghetto was cleared over a six-week period in the summer of 1942, over 300,000 people were dispatched to Treblinka.

The peak period of deportation was between 1942 and 1944, though transports were still arriving at Auschwitz in 1945, only days before the advancing Red Army brought the operations of the extermination camps to an end. Even though the need to shuttle troops around a two- and even three-front war put great strain on the rail system, the deportation trains kept rolling. Trains were given additional cars, more victims were crammed into those cars, and they were forced to take indirect routes. Allied bombing caused an immense amount of disruption, but the Nazis continued to send Jews to their deaths. By the end of the war, between five and six million people had been murdered in the factories of death. About half came from Poland, but most of the rest had been moved to the camps in the mass deportations which had taken Jews from virtually every country in occupied Europe.

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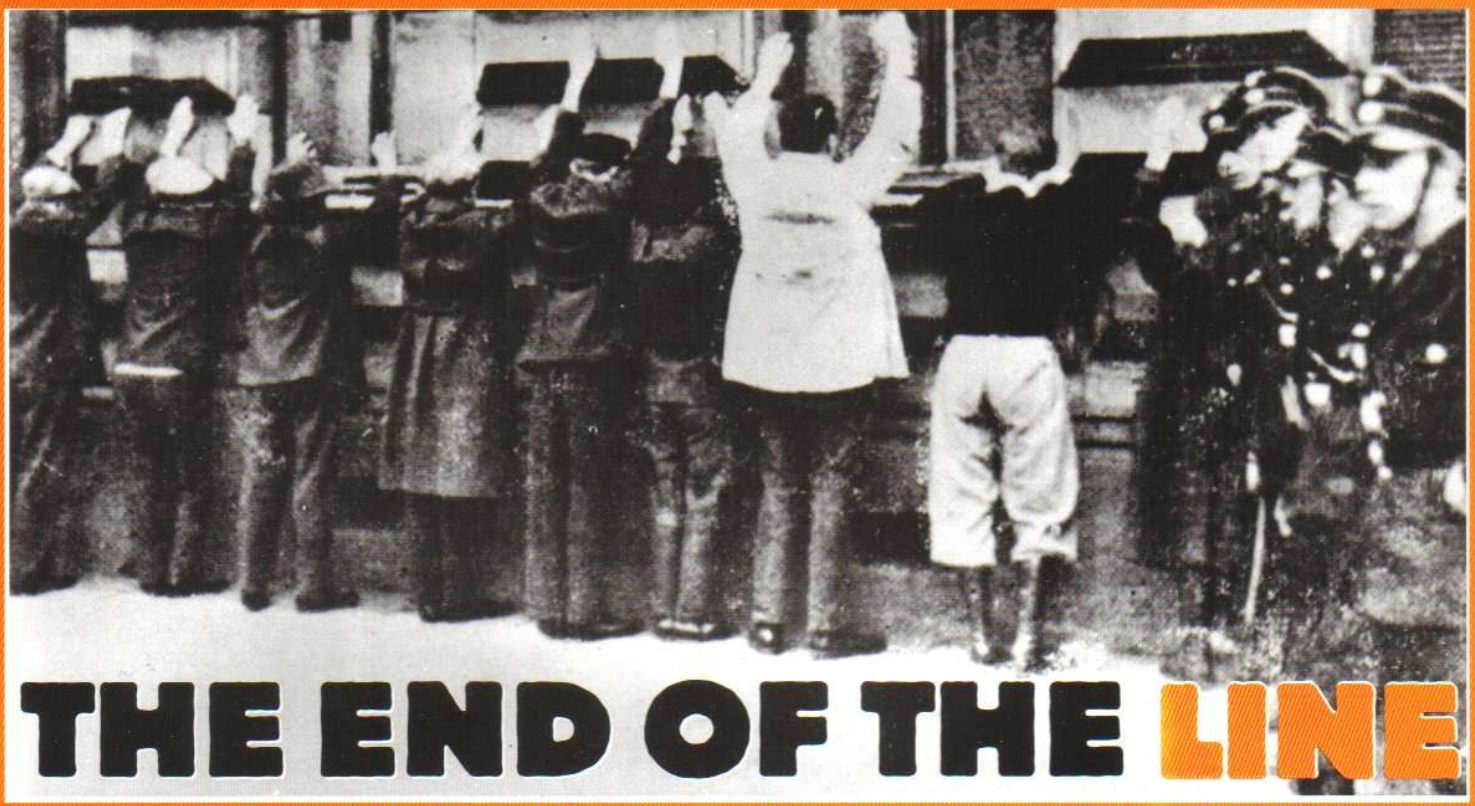


THE END OF THE LINE

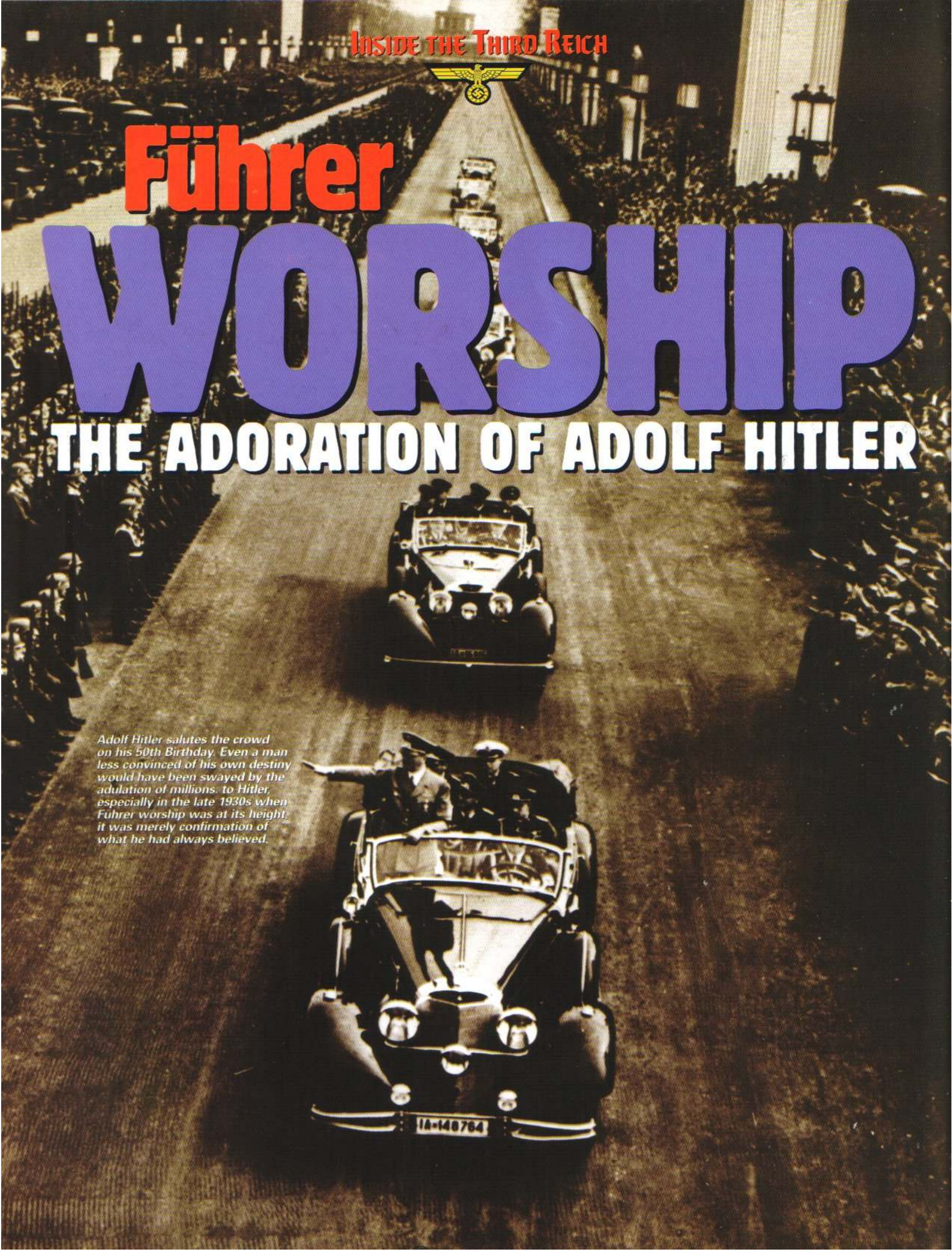
Left: Typically, the freight cars used on the deportation trains were of the 15-tonne 'Karlsruhe' type or similar. Each car had a capacity of up to 100 people and with up to 20 cars per train, a typical transport carried a human cargo of as many as 2,000 deportees. Maximum speed of a laden train was about 40 km/h, though they frequently travelled much more slowly, and could be shunted aside into sidings for hours or even days.

Above: How the journey began. Many of the first deportees had had already been in concentration camps for years. Jewish politicians and trade union officials were special targets for the SA and the SS in the early days of the Third Reich. Those who survived eight years in concentration camps like Dachau were usually in poor condition, and being less able to work they were prime candidates for deportation to the ghettos and death camps.

Below: The end of the line. At the height of the death camp's activity, in the summer of 1944, trains were arriving at Auschwitz direct from as far afield as France and Italy. The largest movement was of Hungarian Jews: three to four transports were arriving each day. Many were overloaded, even by the standards of the Holocaust, with as many as 3,500 victims on each train. Most were taken directly to the gas chambers where they were killed.

Führer WORSHIP

THE ADORATION OF ADOLF HITLER



Adolf Hitler salutes the crowd on his 50th Birthday. Even a man less convinced of his own destiny would have been swayed by the adulation of millions: to Hitler, especially in the late 1930s when Führer worship was at its height, it was merely confirmation of what he had always believed.

Hitler's appeal to the German people in the heady days of the late 1930s transcended the rational. By today's standards, it was like the adoration of a pop star or a crusading evangelist – only ten times greater.

REICH LABOUR minister Robert Ley once described Hitler as, "the only human being who never made a mistake." Hans Frank called him lonely, like everything strong in the world, like God himself. *SS-Gruppenführer* Shulz from Pomerania reached new excesses when he asserted that the Führer was greater than Jesus Christ, for the latter had had only twelve loyal disciples, while Hitler stood at the head of a nation of seventy million people sworn to loyalty.

HEROES AND VILLAINS

Up until modern times, Germans have tended to like their leaders to be larger than life.
Any German head of state had a lot to live up to, with the precedents of genuinely great men like Frederick the Great and Bismarck. Even Kaiser Wilhelm II, whose lust for glory was to lead Germany into ruin, had the sense of style, of the grandiose which the ordinary man in the street expected of his leader.

Things changed under the Weimar Republic. Friederich Ebert, the Social Democratic Chairman of the Council of People's Deputies after World War I, was a working man. Trained as a saddler before entering journalism and then politics, he made a point of being one of the people. Many Germans thought that allowing himself to be photographed in bathing trunks on a Baltic beach detracted from the gravitas of his position, and the 173 libel and defamation actions he fought before his death in 1925 did nothing to improve his image.

Ebert was succeeded by Paul von Beneckendorff und von Hindenburg, who was much more to the ordinary German's taste. The 'Wooden Titan' was an aristocratic war hero, a veteran of the Austrian and Franco-Prussian Wars and victor at Tannenberg in the first year of World War I. Hindenburg initially opposed Adolf Hitler. However, Hitler was far and away the most charismatic politician in Germany in the 1930s, so the aging Field Marshal was eventually forced to accept the Nazi leader as Chancellor.

Hitler also portrayed himself as a man of the people, but one who had transcended his origins in order to lead Germany back to greatness. He stood out in a number of ways: in a country which thrived on beer and sausages, the teetotal vegetarian might have come from another planet. The image he presented to the German people was of a man who had sacrificed his personal life for the good of the *volk*: an ascetic monk with no apparent family or personal ties, no sexual interests.

HIDDEN LIFE

The public never saw the true private man, in his petit bourgeois tea garden setting at Berchtesgaden. They particularly were not allowed to see his female companion, Eva Braun. When Heinrich Hoffmann, the Führer's personal photographer, took a photograph of Hitler playing with Eva Braun's terrier, Hitler remarked "You must not publish this snap, Hoffmann. A statesman does not permit himself to be photographed with a little dog. A German Shepherd is the only dog worthy of a real man."

When Berchtesgaden was seen by the outside world, it was in carefully selected shots showing Hitler gazing out from his study onto the Bavarian Alps, or meeting foreign dignitaries.

HITLER AS MESSIAH

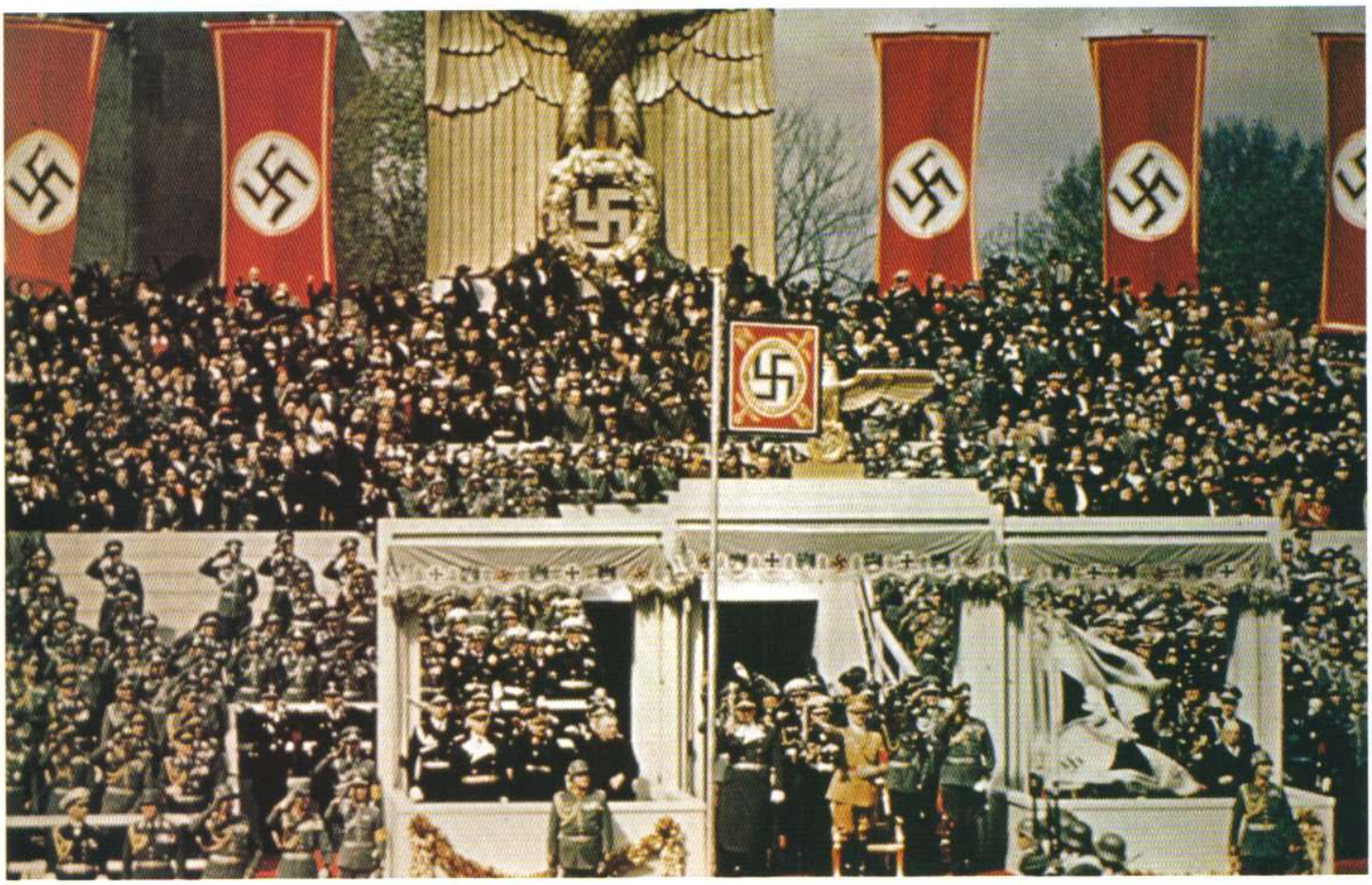
The Nazis carefully cultivated this alternate religion that raised Hitler as the Messiah of the new faith of nationalism and National Socialism. Writing after the war, one German woman called her autobiography '*Mein Kampf* was my Bible.'

Speaking to political leaders In 1936, Hitler adopted a sermon-like tone that was a travesty of religious phraseology.

"How could we not feel once again at this hour the miracle that brought us together? You once heard the voice of a man, and it

Above: Adolf Hitler, the stern leader. Hitler deliberately adopted an unsmiling, almost threatening public persona. He believed that the impression of strength thus projected would only add to the awe in which he was viewed.

Below: Hitler genuinely liked children; he also knew allowing that fact to be publicised was good for his image, especially with women. He wanted them to believe he had sacrificed a normal family life to lead the nation.



Above: Hitler was not vain about his appearance, generally wearing a plain party uniform. However, this may have been calculation: generally surrounded by the peacock-like finery of SS Party and military uniforms, the Führer's simple appearance stood out all the more.

Below: Ecstasy becomes mass hysteria as the Führer passes at Nuremberg. The Reichsparteitage *were textbook examples of how to sway the masses into obedience: the rallies were stage-managed to emphasise the god-like character of Adolf Hitler.*

entered your hearts. It awakened you and you followed this voice. You followed it for years, without even having seen the power of the voice; you merely heard a voice and followed it.

When we meet here, we are all filled by the miraculous spirit of this meeting. Not every one of you sees me, and I do not see every one of you. But I feel you, and you feel me! It is the faith in your nation that has made a small people great, that has made a poor people rich, that has made we vacillating, despondent, frightened people brave and determined; it is faith in our nation which has given we blind wanderers sight and brought us together!"

HITLER AND WOMEN

If men saw Hitler as a leader who would give Germany back its self-respect and used quasi-religious language to describe the Führer, women were even more intemperate in their adulation. One teenager described how her uncle had "given me a little picture of the beloved Führer which I kept like a shrine, and to which I could look up in adoration. I enclosed him in my little heart and was determined not to rest until I had finally grasped the meaning of his idea and his battle."

One woman, having heard Hitler speak for the first time, saw in the Führer a Messiah figure. "From a thousand wounds rose his sweet face, enlivened by a childlike smile of holy self-confidence. Hitler strengthens the spiritual power of the entire *Volk*. Heaven gave us more than we deserved when it sent us the fanatical crusader for honour and freedom, Adolf Hitler".

Hitler's public persona

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Although Munich and Nuremberg were the twin capitals of the Nazi movement, Berlin saw its share of Party spectaculars, designed to enhance the Führer's prestige in the eyes of the world.

Right: Hitler did not forget the Army, whose support he had to win to secure power. In 1935 he cast aside the shackles of the Versailles treaty and organised a massive military ceremony to proclaim Germany's 'Military Freedom'.

Führer Festivals

TO HITLER, Christianity was an 'organised lie' that was to be smashed, and as the new leader of Germany he now had the means to do it. "It is religion," he said, "that rebels against all the joys of the senses." In an attempt to weaken the traditional religious festivals, the Nazis introduced 11 new public holidays that were set aside for parades and celebrations. While some were political anniversaries, others – mainly inspired by Himmler – were pagan Nordic holidays that effectively paralleled the Christian holidays. They were:

30 January
Day of Seizure of Power;
24 February
Foundation of the NSDAP;
16 March
National Day of Mourning/ Heroes' Remembrance Day;
20 April
Hitler's Birthday;
1 May
National Labour Day;
Second Sunday in May
Mother's Sunday;
21 June
Day of the Summer Solstice;
First or second week in September
Reich Party Rally at Nuremberg;
Autumn
Harvest Thanksgiving Day;
9 November
Anniversary of the Beer-Hall Putsch;
21 December
Day of the Winter Solstice.

The Nazis actually parodied the Easter celebration of death and resurrection in two of their festivals: the National Day of Mourning and the Anniversary of the Munich Putsch. Prior to 1933 the National Day of Mourning had been a time of quiet remembrance when war cemeteries were visited and tidied up. Under the Nazis it was renamed Heroes' Remembrance Day and finally became The Day of Restoration of Military Sovereignty with the motto 'They have not died in vain.' The sting had been taken out of the massed deaths of World War I.

On the Anniversary of the Munich Putsch the venerated survivors of this ill-conceived failed coup silently re-enacted their march through the crowd-lined streets of the Bavarian capital. Described as a 'bombastic travesty of a Passion play,' burning beacons like giant funeral pyres marked the route. At the Feldherrnhalle the names of the slain were solemnly declaimed. However, in this parody of the Stations of the Cross, the 'saviour' had survived. He retraced the route in uniform and jack-boots at the head of his disciples. "Calvary and the resurrection had blended into one soul-stirring event."

Above: One of the most important Nazi ceremonies was the commemoration of the Munich Putsch. It was one of the few occasions in which Hitler shared centre stage with anybody else: in this case the fellow Alte Kameraden *who had taken part in the failed coup.*

Below: Hitler was a great believer in the nobility of the soil, so the Harvest Thanksgiving Day was an important event in his calendar. Between 1933 and 1937 it took place on the Bückeberg, near Hameln – in 1937 over one million farmers attended to hear the Führer.

Above: Adolf Hitler in full flow at a Nuremberg Rally before becoming Chancellor. The Nazi Führer's ability to manipulate mass meetings and to incite and inflame ordinary Germans was a vitally important factor in his rise to power.

Below: Hitler's speaking style changed little once he rose to supreme power. He still started slowly, feeling his way into the crowd's mood. But once he caught that mood, he was transformed, whipping otherwise sensible and rational people into a frenzy.

Above: Hitler addresses the veterans of the Beerhall Putsch in Munich's Löwenbraukellar. He felt comfortable with these, his oldest political comrades, and his speeches to the veteran streetfighters were more earthy than those he used on the public.

fostered female adulation. He was portrayed as the wounded World War I veteran who had sacrificed personal pleasure in the service of his country. He had denied himself the pleasures of alcohol, tobacco, red meat. Above all, he had denied himself the pleasures of a female companion. When he was photographed with the beautiful actress Olga Tschehowa, she received a huge flood of fan mail from women. The letters congratulated her: "It is good to know that you will marry Adolf Hitler"; "At last he has found the right partner"; "May God save and bless you!" "Make him happy – he has deserved it!"

HITLER THE ORATOR

There is no question that Hitler's oratory was the driving force behind the Führer worship. He had an almost demonic gift for swaying vast crowds into a state of mindless devotion. Observers noted that he began slowly, "speaking in a low, slow tenor voice. But after about fifteen minutes something occurs that can only be described by the ancient, primitive metaphor: the spirit enters into him."

Hitler himself confessed on one occasion that in front of a jubilant crowd he became "another person".

However after five years in power even Hitler was beginning to believe the propaganda myths about his infallibility. In the summer of 1937 he declared "When I look back upon the five years that lie behind us, I can say, this was not the work of human hands alone!"

Even when Germany was clearly losing the war the mass of the population did not lose faith in Hitler. He would save them with new wonder weapons and if defeat was inevitable there were rumours that the nation would be put gently to sleep with a painless gas.

DELUDED TO THE END

Hitler's survival following the July 1944 Bomb Plot was further confirmation that he was Germany's man of destiny and Goebbels could say *"Hitler ist der Sieg"* – Hitler is Victory. Earlier on 20 July, when the rumour of his death had reached the Wehrmacht HQ in Paris, panic-stricken girl switchboard operators had burst into tears.

When the excesses of the Final Solution became public in 1945, many Germans firmly believed that this had been the work of renegade Nazis, since the Führer would never have permitted it. Earlier, the news of Hitler's death prompted a wave of suicides – those who died never knowing that they had been duped. Hitler, the Nazi god, shot himself and did not die in combat in Berlin as the radio broadcasts stated.

The Führer's Face

National Socialism's Icon

BRONZE BUSTS and plaques of Adolf Hitler, his face set in a severe frown, were omnipresent in Nazi Germany. Together with the heroic portraits and posters displayed in public places they took on the character of icons. Some houses had a 'Hitler Corner,' and as Allied air raids increased it was widely believed that if a house was hit this corner would miraculously be spared destruction.

On 20 April, the Führer's birthday, photographs and portraits of Germany's leader were printed in every newspaper. They appeared in gilt frames surrounded by twig and flower garlands in shop windows, and swastika banners hung from public and private buildings.

SELF IMAGE

Hitler himself was very image conscious, doing his best to see that no informal photographs became public. He was always depicted as the stern or paternal leader in whose hands Germany was secure. The only exception was when he was photographed with children: it was the only time the Führer would allow the public to see him smile.

The image added to his myth. From the beginning, the German people were told that Hitler and Hitler alone had solved the economic woes of the country, restored its military self-respect and recovered territory lost following the Armistice of 1918.

FATED BY PROVIDENCE

Hitler was seen as a medium or intermediary between the German people and providence. Treated as a mystic figure, he was even credited with faith healing powers. In June 1935 he mingled with the bereaved at the funeral of some Berlin U-Bahn (subway) construction workers in a manner evocative of a medieval monarch's laying on of hands. Devoted believers even talked about 'Führer weather', in the belief that even the climate favoured Adolf Hitler with more than his share of sunny days. Even foreigners were beguiled by the cult. At the 1936 Olympics, the British Sunday Times correspondent wrote on 9 August that, "It is uncanny how often Adolf Hitler's entrance coincides with a German Olympic win."

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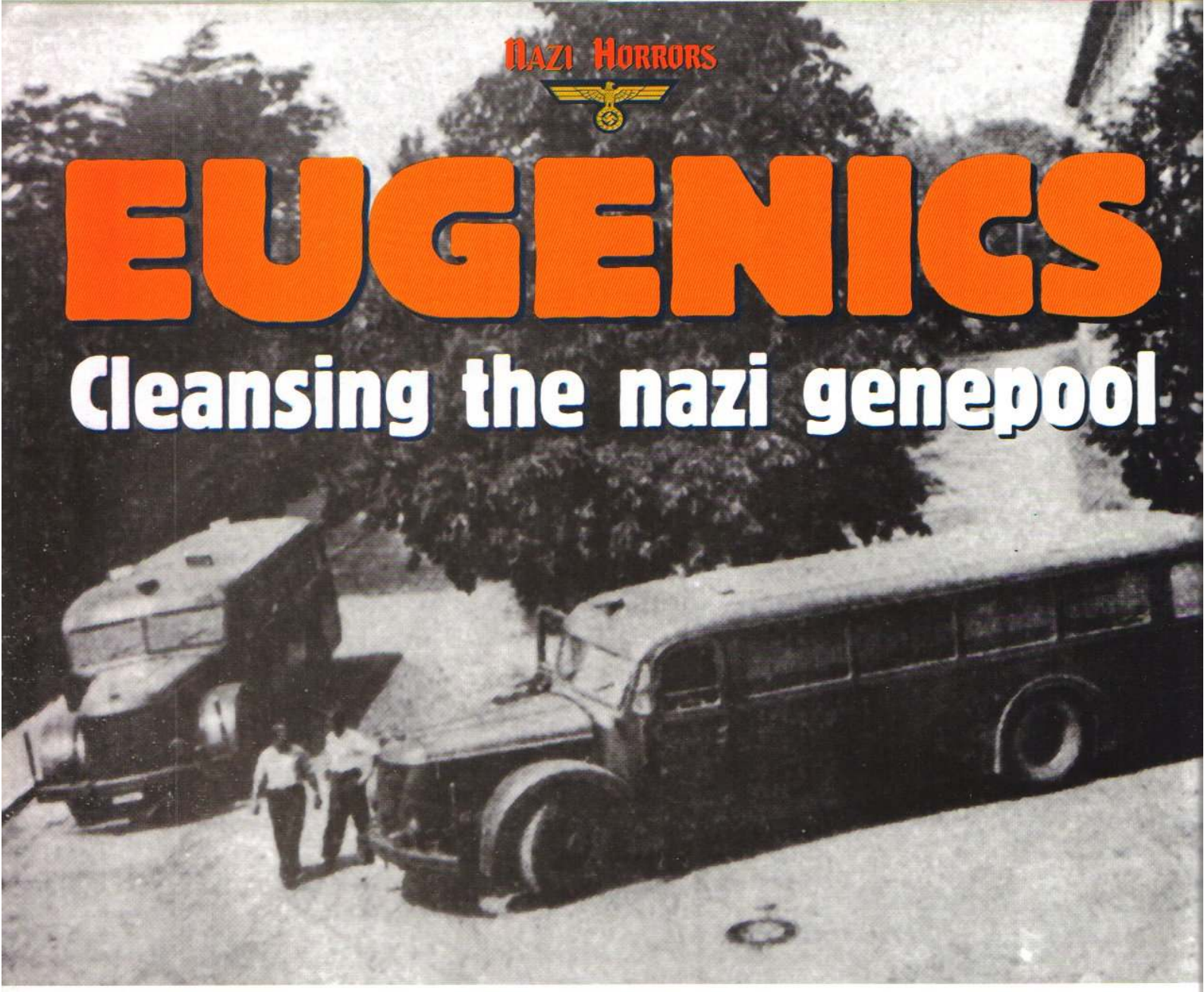
EUGENICS

Cleansing the nazi genepool



One measure of a civilisation is the way that it cares for those who cannot help themselves. The Nazis world view did not include the mentally and physically handicapped, so they were executed.

Above: Buses of the euphamistically entitled 'Public Welfare Ambulance Service Ltd', (a cover for the Berlin euthanasia programme) wait outside the Eichberg mental institution. In these vans those selected as being "unworthy of life", were murdered with poison administered orally or by intravenous injection.

IN SEPTEMBER 1939 Hitler authorised German doctors to kill mentally and physically disabled patients in their care. The murders were to be carried out in secret, but the scale of the programme – the killing of whole wards of patients – could not be concealed forever. The prejudices that enabled medical personnel to embark on a 'final solution' for the chronically sick parallel those that led to the Holocaust. The mechanisms evolved for the slaughter were later used for the 'production line murder' of the Jews: indeed, the first gas chamber (poison supplied by I.G. Farben) was built by medical staff to kill mental patients. It was later shipped to Poland for service in a concentration camp.

A HAPPY DEATH

Euthanasia ('happy death') is widely discussed today. It is practised openly by a handful of doctors and covertly by many more. They advocate the right of their patients to choose an instant, painless death over lingering agony and disability. This very argument was the one advanced by the Nazis to justify their policy. A plea to Hitler by the parents of an incurably sick child was widely publicised.

'Mercy killing' was not the only motivation for the programme, known as 'Aktion T-4' after its Berlin address, Tiergartenstrasse 4. Social Darwinism, the theory that human races were engaged in a struggle for survival, like animal species, promoted the idea of the survival of the fittest. Eugenic theories were widely aired by the end of the nineteenth century: it was observed that animal breeders improve their stock by selective mating. Physical characteristics could be improved, hereditary diseases bred out of the stock.

In *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler claimed the German gene pool

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A still from the 1935 propaganda film, Erbkrank *– 'Congenital Illness'. The Department for Racial Politics sought to portray the incurably mentally ill not only as 'useless eaters' but also as constituting a public danger.*

was contaminated by "the syphilitics, the consumptives, hereditary degenerates, cripples and cretins."

MARKED MAN

The association of outer deformity with inner sin has a long history and remains a central tenet of several religions. It used to be common currency in Britain: Shakespeare makes the villainous Richard III a hunchback, an external sign of his evil. But anyone expressing sympathy with such ideas today is likely to run into serious trouble. It was different at the turn of the century. When Hitler was growing up, this was not a matter of dubious philosophy but a burgeoning 'pop science' called criminal anthropology.

Phrenologists believed they could determine psychological characteristics by measurements of the skull. A logical extension was to identify criminal behaviour with certain physical attributes. Although it seems hard to credit now, there was serious talk of 'murderers' thumb,' or of killers being hairier than other men.

The sterilisation of mental patients was advocated in Europe and North America as soon as the procedure became commonly available. Indiana was the first state to sanction it, in 1907 and the principle was upheld by Supreme Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes who agreed to the sterilisation of a retarded girl, daughter of a mentally handicapped mother, who had already given birth to a retarded child: "three generations of imbeciles are enough."

Nazi Germany passed a sterilisation law in 1933, by which time 30 US states had similar legislation; Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden followed suit. By 1960, some 60,000 Americans had been sterilised.

FORCED STERILISATION

The Nazis were more thorough: between 1933 and 1939 some 375,000 Germans, mainly women, were sterilised on grounds of mental incompetence. It became known as the 'Hitler cut', a play on the German word for Caesarian section.

Why stop there? Medical, philosophical and political opinion converged in interwar Germany to support the killing of mentally and physically disabled people. It would remove them from the gene pool, end their suffering and the anguish (and medical bills) of their relatives.

Nevertheless, the Nazis were anxious about the reaction of the people, above all the churches. Overseen by Dr Karl Brandt, one of his personal physicians, T-4 was part of Hitler's chancellery. Documents were couched in deliberately neutral language – 'negative population policies' – which again prefigures the Holocaust. Three organisations were created by T-4.
The 'Foundation for the Care of Institutions in the Public interest' financed it. The 'Reichs Association of Sanitoriums and Nursing homes' administered it.

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Above:* Lebensunwertes Lebens *or 'Life Unworthy of Life' was the Nazi term for the incurably ill or mentally handicapped. Over 100,000 of these helpless people were gassed, poisoned or starved between 1933 and 1945.

Below: Leonardo Conti (1900-1945) was appointed Reich Health Inspector in 1939. It was Conti, an SS* Gruppenführer*, who was ultimately responsible for condemning the mentally ill.

Below: Philip Bouhler (1899-1945), a founder member of the NSDAP was assigned by Hitler, together with Karl Brandt, to implement the Euthanasia program on 1 September 1939.

The 'Charitable Patient Transportation Company' ferried patients to the killing centres in a fleet of distinctive grey buses manned by SS medical staff.

They called it 'final medical assistance'. Questionnaires were sent to mental homes and hospitals caring for the chronically sick. A committee of doctors examined the forms and selected patients for death. There were a few queries about the legality of the process, but few objections. Only one category of long term illness was specifically excluded: disablement through war service. This suggests the doctors knew the programme would become public knowledge. The impact on the morale of the armed forces can be imagined, if soldiers learned that serious physical injury or 'shell shock' would be treated not in hospital but a gas chamber.

HONOURABLE MEN

There were some 15,000 doctors in Germany during the 1930s. Half joined the Nazi party, the highest proportion of any profession. They did very well out of Hitler. The 1935 Health in Marriage law required couples to undergo a physical; the sterilisation programme involved nearly 400,000 operations. Nazi health programmes included X-ray screenings for tuberculosis, dental care, physical examinations for children at 6, 10, 14 and 18. The average doctor's income increased by 60 per cent from 1933-38.

Had the doctors opposed euthanasia, it would have been stopped. Instead, they sat in secret committees deciding which of their fellow citizens should be killed. The only objection came from some psychiatric specialists who realised that the completion of the programme would leave them no actual patients.

Institutions at Grafeneck, Brandenburg, Hartheim, Bernberg, Hadamar, and Sonnestein carried out the killings. SS-*Obersturmführer* Christian Wirth executed patients by pistol shots to the back of the head, but the preferred methods were the gas chamber or lethal injections.

The pretence of medical treatment continued until the last moment, with the provision of blankets, flasks of soup for long journeys and – the ultimate trick – the gas chamber disguised as a shower.

Relatives received falsified death certificates, the dates of the deaths spread over a period to avoid suspicion. The doctors were supposed to give a cause of death appropriate to individual cases, but some were careless, attributing death to serious conditions that the victims' recent visitors would have noticed. Others were so typically thorough that they sent out death certificates in alphabetical order.

Some relatives were genuinely pleased, for the best reasons, that family members were released from suffering. They wrote to thank the doctors. Others, and some medical staff at nursing homes, were appalled and sought legal redress. Eventually, German judges had to be briefed on the programme so they would quash legal action by the bereaved. Only one refused and was retired.

Many of the more seriously physically disabled victims may have accepted or even welcomed death, but not all did. A number, suspecting what the doctors were actually doing, wrote frantic letters to friends and families looking to avoid their fate. A lucky few were quietly released home by nurses who knew for whom the grey bus had come.

MEDICAL MURDER

Of the 16,295 mental patients registered in Brandenburg in 1938, only 2,379 were still alive in 1945. In 1939 there were 300,000 mental patients in all Germany, but only 40,000 in 1945. By no means all died in the euthanasia programme, but the German medical profession certainly killed more than 70,000 people before the end of the war. According to T-4's own records, 35,225 patients were murdered in

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TURBULENT PRIEST

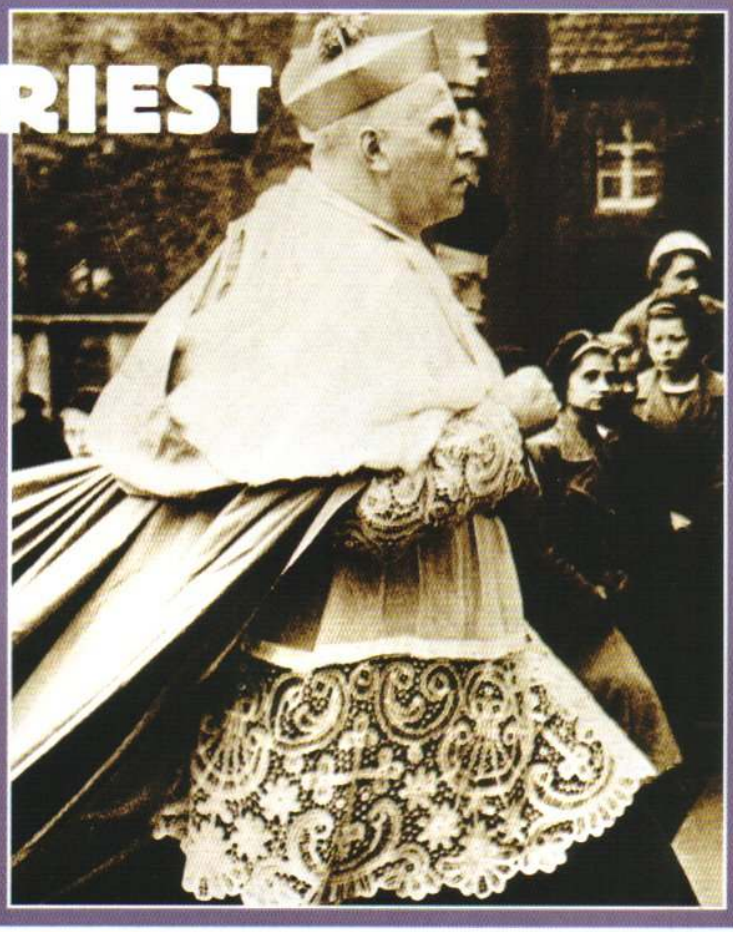
CLEMENS August Graf von Galen, Bishop of Münster was an unlikely protester, being an aristocratic, conservative, patriotic cleric. But he was no Nazi stooge. In one sermon he warned that the activities of the Hitler Youth should not be regarded as a substitute for the religious instruction of Germany's children. A Party member present shouted: 'What right a celibate, without wife or children to talk about the problems of youth and marriage?' Galen's lightning riposte was to bang the pulpit and call for silence. "Never," he intoned, "will I tolerate in this cathedral, any reflection on our beloved Führer."

Goebbels' anti-religious propaganda campaign had already culminated in the seizure of church property by the outbreak of war. Bishop Galen physically opposed Gestapo officials he found occupying a Jesuit mission in Münster. But he sealed his reputation in the summer of 1941. In three homilies he condemned the euthanasia programme, saying:

"No man has the right to kill an innocent person, no matter what the reason, except in case of war or legitimate self defence." He predicted that: "Some secret order could expand the treatment of the mentally ill to other unproductive people, such as the elderly and severely wounded soldiers. Nobody would be safe... Who could trust his doctor?"

Martin Bormann wanted to have the Bishop killed. But Galen eluded the death sentence because of Hitler's concern over the morale of Catholic soldiers: it was easier to shut down T-4.

After the war Galen was equally out-spoken towards the British occupation authorities, whom he admonished to show clemency and fairness.



Right: Galen (1878-1946), the 6 feet 4 inch 'Lion of Münster', remained true to his legend – neither to be enticed nor to be intimidated. The SD characterised his sermons as "the strongest attack to date against the state leadership."

1940 and 35,049 in 1941.

Hitler stopped the official euthanasia programme on 24 August 1941 by means of a verbal order to Dr Brandt. This move was largely due to the scandal being created by the interference of Bishop von Galen.

INNOCENTS MASSACRED

Tragically, that was not the end of Nazi euthanasia. From August 1939 the 'Reichs Committee for Scientific Research of Serious Illness of Hereditary and Protonic Origin' began the elimination of those infants and children up to the age of three suffering from specified deformities such as blindness, deafness, Down's Syndrome, and paralysis. The list sent to doctors and hospitals was long. Midwives were paid 2 RM for filling in a report and fined 150 RM if they did not. The papers were submitted to teams of three doctors who marked them with pluses and minuses: three minuses spelt death.

Surviving paperwork documents the killing of 5,000 babies, mostly by lethal injection, but when the Allies overran Germany they encountered scenes in many German nursing homes that defy comprehension. Thousands of children had been starved to death or allowed to die of hypothermia or induced diarrhoea.

COLLECTIVE AMNESIA

Euthanasia did not even stop at the end of the war. German doctors returning to their peacetime duties after army service found their former colleagues giving lethal injections to psychiatric patients. At Elfing-Haar, US medical officers found a children's hospital with a 'special wing' in which 20 children were being starved to death. The hospital's records charted the murder of 2,000 adult patients and 300 children.

After the war the German medical profession closed ranks, its selective amnesia enabling it to quash any serious examination of the euthanasia programme until the 1980s. The Federal Chamber of Physicians only acknowledged the grisly record of German doctors in 1989. Since then a grand total of two men have been compelled to resign from university posts or honorary positions.

Above: Dr Karl Brandt, Hitler's attending physician controlled all military and civilian medical institutions from 1942. As well as implementing the Euthanasia programme he bore a great deal of responsibility for the medical experiments being carried out on concentration camp inmates. He was sentenced to death at Nuremberg in the so-called 'Doctors' Trial' and was executed on 2 June 1948.

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Karl Doenitz

THE LAST FÜHRER

Karl Doenitz poses for a propaganda picture with armaments minister Albert Speer. Both men were realists, who knew that the U-Boat arm offered the best chance of beating the British, but by the time they could build enough boats it was too late.

Of all of Hitler's commanders, Karl Doenitz was the one who came closest to winning the war for the Nazis. Had he been given the resources he asked for, Britain could have been starved into submission.

ON APRIL 1945 *Grossadmiral* Karl Doenitz, Commander-in-Chief of the Kriegsmarine, was overseeing the last major operation conducted by Hitler's navy: the evacuation of over two million civilians and soldiers from eastern Germany. He knew the war was lost. All that remained was to save as many people as possible from the revenge of the Red Army.

On 23 April, at his headquarters at Plön, in northern Germany, he learned of Goering's 'attempted coup' and subsequent dismissal. Berlin was cut off and the last attempt to break through to the beleaguered capital was halted at Potsdam by overwhelming Russian forces. Then came an unexpected signal from Martin Bormann. Hitler was dead and the admiral was appointed Führer in his place.

Doenitz had not met with Hitler in private since the summer of 1944. He could only guess at the events in Berlin leading up to his appointment. Only after the war would he discover that the suggestion came from Albert Speer, visiting Hitler to say farewell. Bormann, appointed Party leader in Hitler's will, signalled his intention to join Doenitz in the north, but vanished into the chaos. Not that he would have found sanctuary at naval headquarters: Doenitz had ordered his men to arrest Bormann or Goebbels if they arrived at his gates.

SNUBBING HIMMLER

The infinitely more dangerous Heinrich Himmler was already in the north, trying frantically to negotiate with the Allies through Swedish intermediaries. After Hitler's death, the *Reichsführer* presented himself to Doenitz with an SS bodyguard at his back. The time to be scared of the SS was long past, however, and the admiral told Himmler that there was no place for him in the post-Hitler administration. He had a pistol concealed among papers on his desk, just in case. But it did not come to violence. Himmler left, a broken man, despised by the very praetorian guard he had created.

Doenitz had become Führer by default, the only service chief with any credibility. Hermann Goering had been Hitler's nominated successor for years, but he was derided throughout the Reich for his failure to stop Allied bombers. Hitler had sacked the commander-in-chief

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of the German army early in the Russian campaign, assuming supreme command himself. Himmler, 'the loyal Heinrich' had just betrayed his Führer. Neither of Hitler's surviving senior henchmen – Joseph Goebbels and Martin Bormann – could command authority over the armed forces, as Doenitz's orders to his security detail demonstrated.

NAVAL CAREER

Karl Doenitz began his naval career as a cadet in the Imperial Fleet in 1910. On the outbreak of the First World War he was serving aboard the light cruiser *Breslau* that had accompanied the battlecruiser *Goeben* into the Mediterranean. The two ships eluded the Royal Navy to establish themselves at Constantinople (Istanbul). Flying the Turkish flag, they engaged Russia's Black Sea Fleet in a series of raids and counter-raids. Like many of the more aggressive junior officers Doenitz requested a transfer to the expanding submarine fleet, and he joined U 39 in January 1917, sailing on five war patrols as Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare. He gained his first command, the small minelayer UC 25 in March 1918. Disaster struck on 4 October 1918 when his next command, UB 68 foundered as he attempted to attack a convoy in the Mediterranean. He and most of his crew were taken prisoner.

SUBMARINE EXPERT

Doenitz returned to Germany in 1919 and applied to remain in the much-reduced German navy, despite the post-war ban on German possession of submarines. He spent some time in torpedo boats, then in 1934 took command of the training cruiser *Emden*. Disappointment at not completing her world cruise to the Far East in 1935 was tempered by his appointment to lead the new U-boat arm of Hitler's Kriegsmarine.
The British, incredibly, raised no objection to the re-establishment of a German submarine force during naval arms limitation talks in London. On 1 January Doenitz was created *Führer des Unterseeboote* (FdU) and proceeded to educate his new officers with the lessons he had learned during 1917-18.

A professional seaman of long experience, Karl Doenitz was a loyal follower of Adolf Hitler. Even when his U-Boat crews were being ravaged by Allied counter-measures, he encouraged the young submariners to continue the fight for the Führer and the Fatherland.

NEW TACTICS

Frequently at sea in the small coastal Type II U-boats (known as 'ducks'), Doenitz established a very personal style of leadership. He lectured and wrote on submarine warfare, publishing his views in the open press. That the U-boat tactic of night surface attacks came as a surprise to the Royal Navy in 1940 is a damning indictment of naval intelligence between the wars.

Doenitz was not appointed *Kapitän zur See* (Captain) until 1935 and on the outbreak of the Second World War he was still a *Kommodore*. He did not raise his flag as a *Konteradmiral* (Rear Admiral) until 1 October 1939.

As in most navies of the time, senior German officers from Admiral Raeder downwards were 'big ship men' who looked on the U-boat arm as 'grubby.' Specialisation in submarines or anti-submarine warfare was not

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Above: Doenitz contemplates a chart of the Atlantic. His strategy and tactics were devastatingly effective in this vital battlefield up until 1943, but once the U-Boats lost the initiative they were never to regain it.

Above right: In May 1945 Grand Admiral Karl Doenitz steps down the gangplank of a depot ship and into captivity, having given up command of the Kriegsmarine to become Germany's last wartime head of state.

Below: Early August, 1944. Doenitz listens as Hitler, still shaken by the bomb attempt on his life, speaks with Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop and Reichsleiter Bormann. Hitler knew he could count on Doenitz' support, even though he rarely gave the Admiral much support in return. Doenitz was one of the most loyal of Hitler's senior commanders, and he condemned the 20th of July plotters as dishonourable.

a fast track to flag rank. The future, they believed, would be in two squadrons of gigantic battleships, of which *Bismarck* and *Tirpitz* would be the smallest.

Doenitz argued that this was a mistake, repeating the battleship race that poisoned Anglo-German relations at the turn of the century. It was a race that Germany could not win, since the British had started with a substantial numerical advantage.

Doenitz claimed that a fleet of 300 U boats, sufficient to have a hundred or so at sea at any given time, could dominate the Atlantic and impose a total blockade on Britain. A large fleet of submarines was planned, but would not be ready until the late 1940s, when the German navy would be ready to take on the Royal Navy. When war came a decade early in 1939, the great battleship construction programme had barely begun and Germany did not even have as many submarines as the London Naval Treaty allowed them.

WOLFPACKS

Pre-war exercises had convinced Doenitz that convoys were most effectively attacked by groups of U-boats. Attempts to lead them in 'command U-boats' were not successful, but it proved possible to coordinate operations from ashore using encrypted radio transmissions. Early attacks were run from Germany, but after the fall of France, Doenitz transferred U-boat headquarters to the Atlantic coast.

From there he pored over sighting signals from U-boats and aircraft, analysed intercepted Allied radio traffic and studied intelligence reports. He positioned his U-boats in patrol lines across the likely path of the convoys, then vectored in the submarines once contact was established. In spite of never having enough boats, Doenitz' forces wreaked havoc amongst Britain's Atlantic lifeline.

By 1943 Doenitz was responsible for more than submarines. Hitler had never liked or understood the Kriegsmarine, and when he eventually dismissed Admiral Raeder, he picked Doenitz to take his place. Jumped two ranks to *Grossadmiral* (Admiral of the Fleet), Doenitz took command of the navy on 31 January. Now that he could prioritise submarine construction, he eventually got his fleet of 300 submarines. But

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Doenitz' Defeat

TWO MAIN FACTORS ensured that Karl Doenitz' submarine campaign against Britain would fail, and with it Germany's best hope of winning the war.

His operational methods, while very effective at concentrating U-boats when a convoy had been found, also generated a great deal of radio traffic. The U-boat C-in-C relied on the fact that Allied warships could not plot the bearing of U-boat transmissions because the ranges were too great.

BRITISH ADVANTAGES

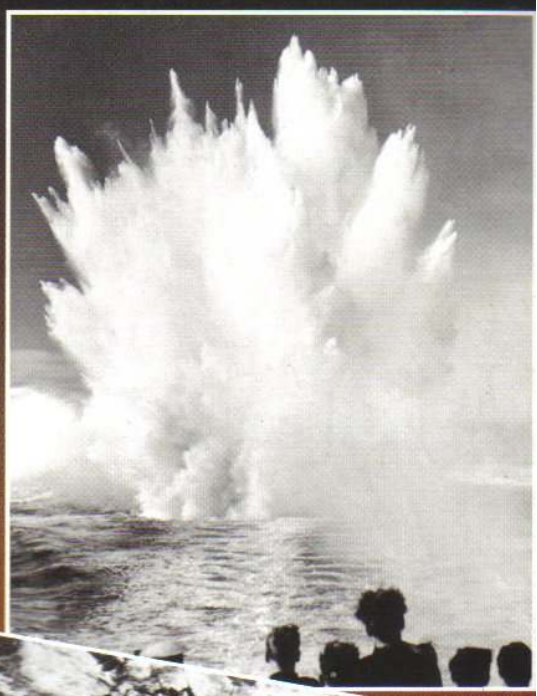
In fact, the British had developed an effective HF/DF (High Frequency/Direction Finding) system, which had been installed on convoy escorts. Warships could run down the bearing and attack a U-boat that had been in contact with Doenitz.

It was also essential that the German naval code remained unreadable by the British. And Doenitz did not know that his codes had been broken.

The story of ULTRA, the Allied success in cracking the German 'Enigma' codes, was first made public in 1975 and has shed new light on the major events of the Second World War. Pioneering computer equipment was combined with first hand knowledge of the German 'hardware', obtained at enormous risk: the boarding party from HMS Petard drowned inside U-559 while retrieving signalling apparatus from the sinking submarine. The Allies targetted German weather ships like the *München*, seized off Jan Mayen island in 1941, and captured several oilers sent out to support the *Bismarck*. Doenitz suspected the system was compromised, but his technical experts assured him that the Allies could not break 'Enigma'. In fact, despite periodic 'black outs' when settings were changed, they decoded his transmissions with increasing regularity.

The effect of ULTRA intelligence on the submarine war was twofold. Initially, the British simply re-routed convoys away from known U-boat positions. Although the U-boats inflicted grievous losses on some convoys, many others were brought safely to port unseen by the enemy. From 1943, as the quality and quantity of escort vessels and anti-submarine aircraft increased, the British assembled 'escort groups' unattached to specific convoys and used to counter-attack U-boat concentrations.

A fearsome battle ensued in the Bay of Biscay as radar-equipped aircraft attacked U-boats in transit from their concrete bunkers at Lorient and Brest.



Death of a U-Boat: German submarine successes of the early years of the war came in spite of very low numbers of boats committed to the Battle of the Atlantic. But by the end of the war, U-boat crews could count on being depth-charged almost anywhere at sea. If they were lucky, the underwater explosives would blow the boat up to the surface (centre) which would give them a chance of survival. But for four out of five German submariners, a spreading slick of oil on the surface of the ocean marking a U-boat's watery grave (bottom) was more likely to be their fate.

U-boat casualties became unsustainable, with a terrifyingly high proportion of boats lost on their first patrol. Inexperienced captains with conscript crews faced battle-hardened veterans of the Royal Navy's ASW groups and the ever-increasing strength of US Navy.

One of Doenitz's sons perished in a U-boat in 1943, but he maintained the battle even after its futility was plain. He argued that Germany was now fighting for her life and the U-boat arm must fight on just as the army and air force were. By the time Doenitz became Führer, his other son had fallen too, killed in a torpedo boat in early 1945.

Doenitz endeavoured to make a separate peace with the western Allies, while holding the front in the east. Field Marshal Montgomery was quite happy to proceed, but General Eisenhower refused. Doenitz duly surrendered and, as the leader of Germany's successor government, was arrested and ultimately tried at Nuremberg.

WAR CRIMES TRIAL

As Doenitz himself remarked, the Allies were hardly going to let the head of the German government walk free from the war crimes trials and his sentence of ten years was no surprise. His defence, conducted with sparkling style by the German navy's top lawyer, *Flottenrichter* Franzbüller, made a mockery of most charges. To the charge that he had ordered his men to conduct 'unrestricted submarine warfare' he was able to bring the British Admiralty and Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz to his aid: the American commander made plain that US Navy submarines had been given the same orders in 1941.

Doenitz professed that the first he had heard of the concentration camps was when *Generaloberst* Jodl gave him a copy of *Stars and Stripes* just after they were arrested. Like Speer, he stuck to his story through thick and thin. American writer John Toland interviewed him several times, noting his characteristic combination of 'military virtue and moral blindness'.

To the end, Doenitz was idolised by his men, and his death in December 1980 inspired fear of a 'Nazi' funeral. Officers of the Federal German navy were forbidden to attend in uniform. Doenitz was borne to the grave by six former U-boat commanders. All were winners of the Knights' Cross, and all wore their medals.

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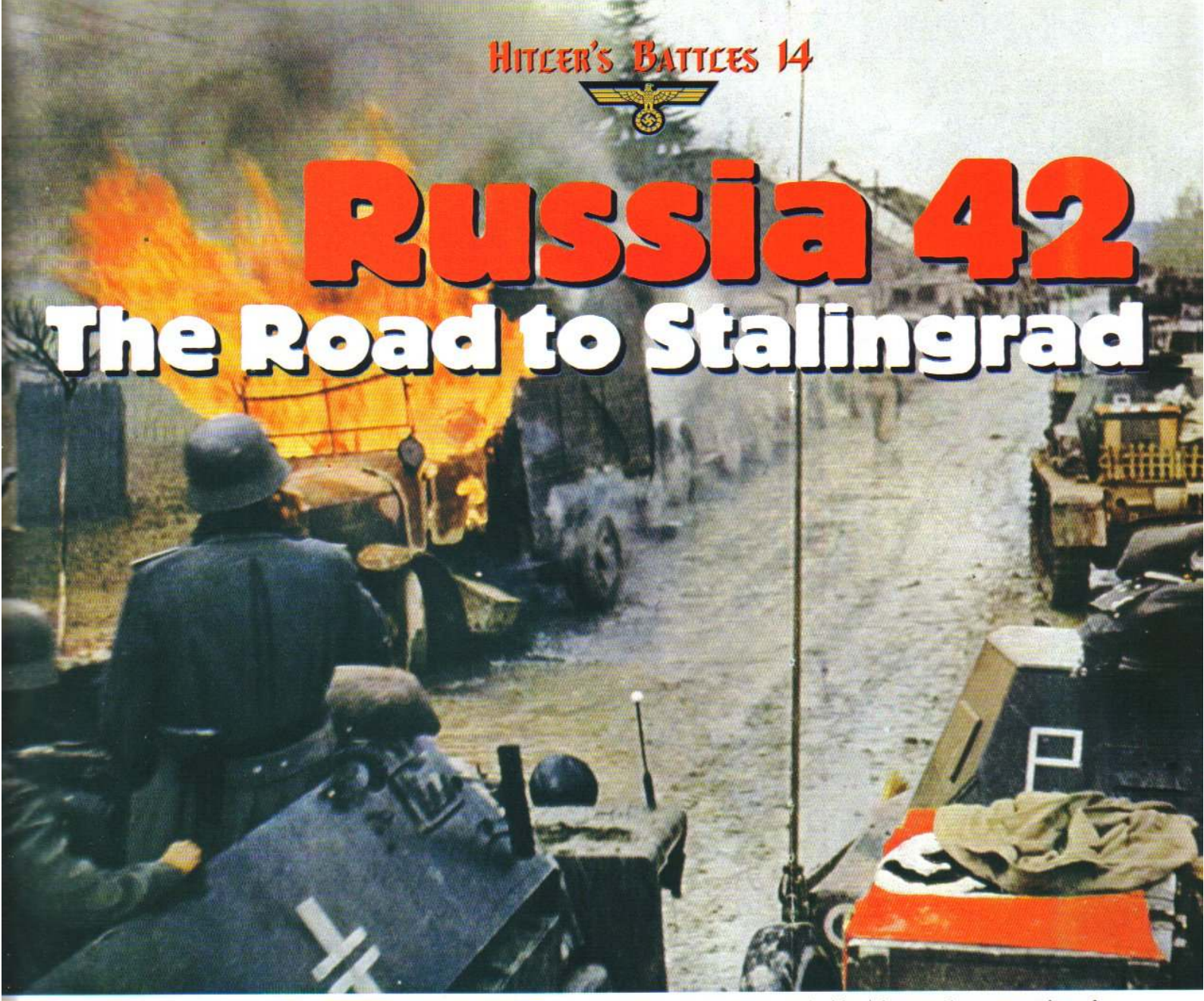
Russia 42
The Road to Stalingrad



In the summer of 1942, Hitler's armies unleashed an assault on the the oil fields of the Caucasus and Stalingrad. But Germany no longer had the resources to take on both targets simultaneously.

HITLER DECREED that Moscow would not be occupied after the German victory, but razed to the ground. Leningrad, cradle of the Bolshevik revolution was to be levelled too. The Red Army's December counter-attack saved the Soviet capital for the moment, but the great industrial centre of Leningrad was surrounded. Its population swollen to over three million by refugees flooding into the city ahead of the invaders, it was cut off by Germans to the south and to the north by the Finns, eager to avenge the Winter War.

Communist Party chiefs anxiously calculated their food reserves: on 1 November they realised there was only enough food for another week. And with winter approaching, there was so little fuel that buildings could not be heated and electricity was rationed to an hour a day. What followed was the most ghastly siege in history, a long drawn-out agony in which nearly a million men, women and children died of cold and slow starvation – three times the total war dead suffered by Britain or the USA in the whole of World War II. The German army made no attempt to storm the city. Heavy guns bombarded it daily, letting hunger and the bitter winter weather do the rest.

Elsewhere, Stalin ordered an ambitious series of attacks after the Red Army stopped the Germans at the gates of Moscow. His generals knew what happened to commanders who failed, and launched offensives all along the line. But despite tattered uniforms stuffed with straw and newspaper, weapons that jammed in the arctic temperatures and a grave lack of tanks or aircraft, the German army defended itself with extraordinary professionalism and courage. An attempt to relieve Leningrad was beaten off and counter-attacks not only restored the front, but trapped two Soviet armies behind the lines where they were destroyed in the spring.

NO RELIEF FOR LENINGRAD

The fluid fighting in early 1942 left German forces encircled too. The Soviet Northwest Front

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The Wehrmacht's summer offensive in 1942 started out as devastatingly as the 1941 campaign. But this time the Germans knew that the Red Army would be a much tougher proposition.

Left: One of the problems facing the Germans was congestion: too many tanks using too few roads suitable for heavy armour.

"4th Panzer Army could have taken Stalingrad without a fight in July, but it was sent south to help my army cross the Don. I did not need help: all the extra troops did was to congest the roads. By the time 4th Panzer returned to Stalingrad at the beginning of August, the Russians had moved in enough force to put up a serious fight."

Field Marshal Ewald von Kleist

broke through in the Valdai hills, isolating several pockets of German troops who continued to defend their perimeters. In each case, the trapped divisions were clustered around an airfield, and the Luftwaffe flew in supplies until either relief was at hand, or – in the case of General von Seydlitz's six divisions at Demiansk – the Germans broke out to fight their way home. Seydlitz's men took a month to battle their way across the snow, their epic *katabasis* sustained by parachute drops and an iron determination never to surrender. In the euphoria that greeted their escape, the German high command overlooked the physical state of the survivors: months of combat on the frozen steppe, with inadequate rations, medical and sanitary facilities left many men unfit for further service. The Germans also drew the comforting conclusion that they could keep encircled units supplied by air, an assumption that would be tested to destruction within a year.

CASUALTIES COMPARED

The German army suffered some 80,000 casualties in the Soviet winter offensive. It inflicted over 400,000 casualties in return, and many soldiers puzzled over the Red Army's ability to take such punishment. What the Soviets lacked in military skill, they made up for with fanatical – often futile – bravery. Goebbels damned them as mindless automata, an enduring image that survived long after 1945.

The spring thaw halted operations. With the German army still less than 300 km (190 miles) from Moscow, a distance the panzer divisions could cover in a week, the Soviets concentrated their forces around the capital. It was the obvious military strategy, and it was wrong. Hitler was looking south, to the Crimea, which he described as an unsinkable aircraft carrier within range of the Romanian oilfields – without which his panzers would go nowhere. The port of Sevastopol must be taken and the other Soviet foothold on the peninsula, the Kerch straits, must be seized as a platform for the next stage; the capture of the Caucasus and the Caspian oilfields 650 km (400 miles) beyond the front line.

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Above: Oil supplies blaze at Kuban as Army Group A penetrates deep into the Caucasus. But a reorganised Soviet defence blocked further advances as Stalin issued his 'Not a step backward' order on 28 July.

Below: On 21 August the elite Gebirgsjäger *planted the* Swastika *flag on the summit of Mt. Elburus. Meanwhile, the rest of 49th Mountain corps advanced into the sub-tropical forests girding Sukhumi.*

The Wehrmacht had lost one million men in the east by the spring of 1942. Hitler demanded his allies make up the numbers, the Romanian and Italian armies supplying half a million men that year. By German standards they were poorly equipped and often badly trained, so they were mainly used to hold quiet sectors while the German formations led the attacks. By replacing German civilian labourers with slaves seized from eastern Europe, stripping battalions from divisions garrisoning western Europe, and calling up the next year's conscription class a year early, the Wehrmacht was able to assemble 2.7 million men on the Russian front. This accretion of strength could not be repeated, so Hitler was betting everything on one roll of the die.

RUSSIAN MIRACLE

Through the winter of 1941-42, hundreds of miles from the front line and invisible to the Germans, another army was labouring in impossible conditions. As the USSR's key industrial regions were over-run by the invaders, whole factories were uprooted and shipped to the Urals, to the deserts of Kazakhstan or the frozen tundra of Siberia. Over 1.5 million wagon loads made the journey, workers – many of them women – struggling to set up machine tools literally in the middle of nowhere. Not only did they get the factories working again, but they did so with unbelievable speed. The Yak fighter plant in Moscow was dismantled and taken to Siberia where production resumed in only a week. By early 1942 it was building more aircraft per month than it had done on its original site. From a far inferior base – Russia produced only a quarter as much steel as Germany – the Soviets were already out-building the invaders, supplying their armies with more tanks, guns and aircraft than the Wehrmacht was receiving.

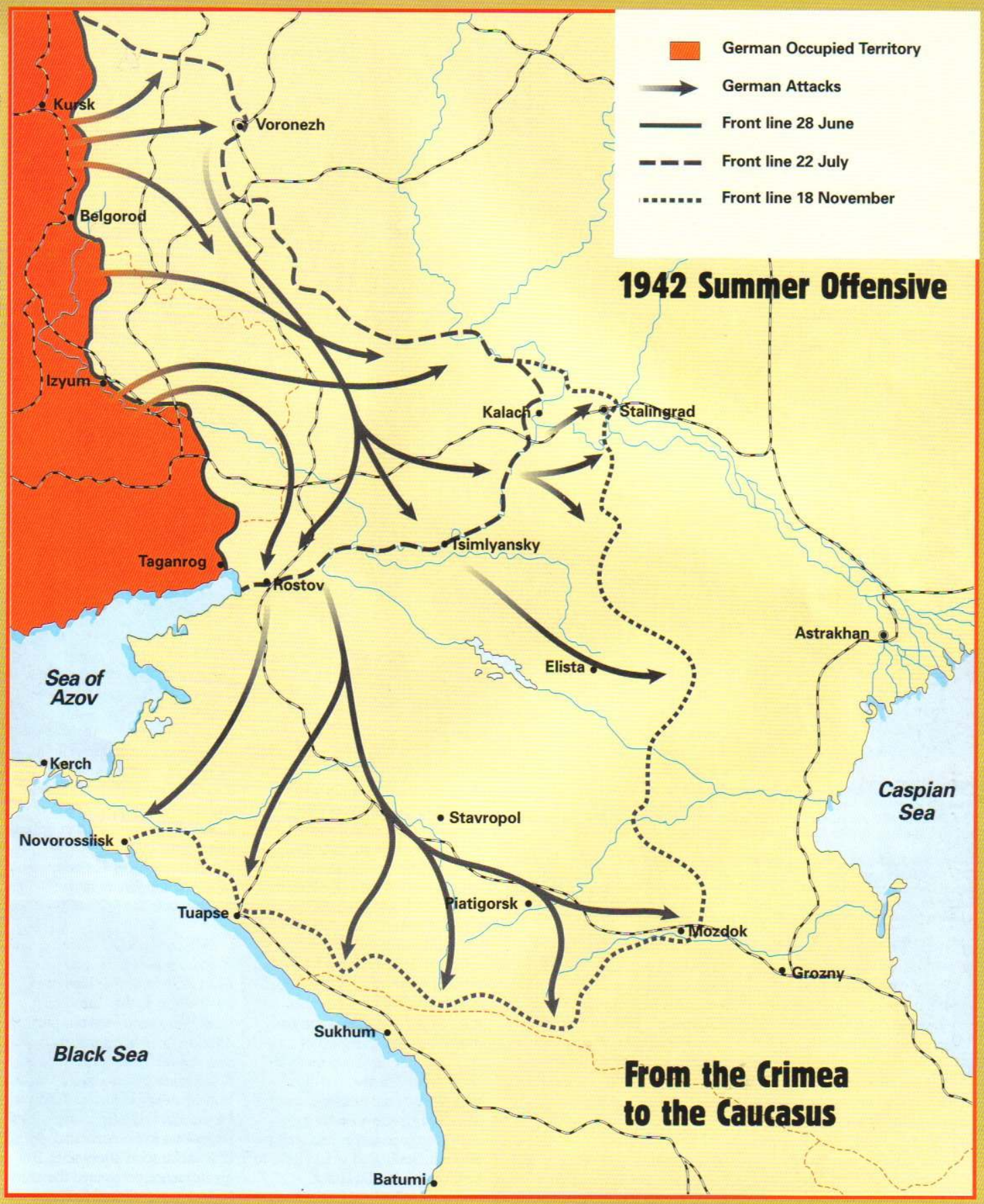
The return of warmer weather was the signal for another Soviet offensive, an attempt to recapture Kharkov which failed dismally. Ten days' hectic thrust and counter-thrust in open country turned into a master class in *blitzkrieg*. The advancing Russians were outmanoeuvred by the superbly co-ordinated German air and ground forces. Marshal Timoshenko was summoned to Moscow to explain the loss of another three armies totalling over 200,000 men.

CRIMEA STORMED

As the German 6th and 17th armies shattered the Russian offensive at Kharkov, the 11th army broke through the heavily-fortified Soviet positions on the Kerch peninsula and drove the defenders into the Black Sea. Then it doubled back to storm Sevastopol, home port of the Soviet Black Sea Fleet.

Hitler moved his HQ to Vinnitsa in the Ukraine to oversee the next stage. Army Group South, re-named Army Group B (2nd and 6th armies, 4th Panzer army and 3rd Hungarian army) was to advance into the bend of the Don river then on to the Volga at Stalingrad. The other claw in a gigantic pincer movement would be a new formation, Army Group A (1st Panzer army, the 17th army and 3rd Romanian army) which would link up with Army Group B somewhere on the steppe west of the Volga, hopefully trapping another vast haul of Russian prisoners. Having gutted the Soviet armies again, Army Group A would then lunge east again to over-run the Soviet oilfields.

Six months after they had endured winter temperatures of -30°C, German soldiers found themselves on the Kuban steppe where the thermometer topped 40°C in the shade. Inside the tanks of 1st Panzer army the heat was simply unbearable. They captured the blazing wreckage of Maikop's oil installations, blown up by the Soviet rearguard. Shimmering in the distance like a layer of cloud, the Caucasus mountains were visible for miles



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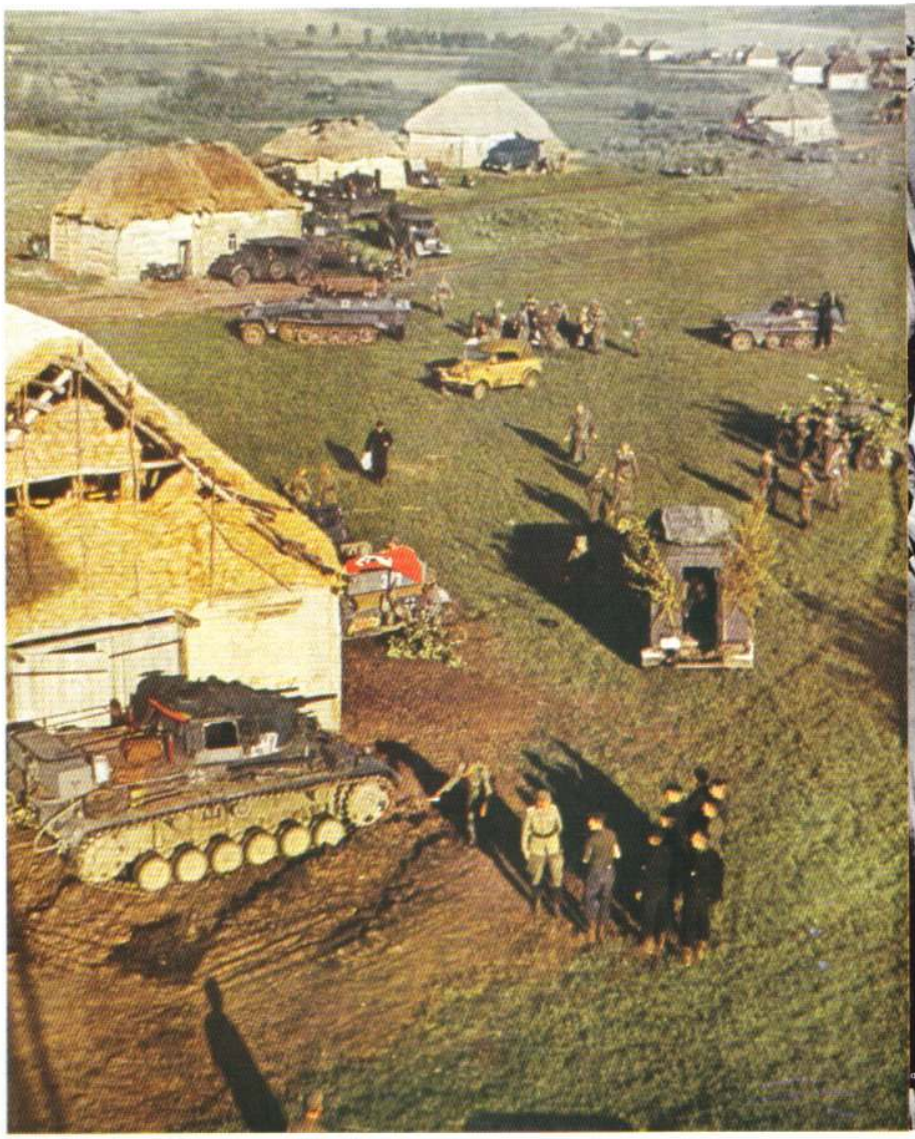

Above: Assorted vehicles of a Panzer division take a break from the fighting as Hoth's army breaks through the Soviet lines in July 1942. The Soviets had captured German plans for the drive on the Caucasus, but Stalin clung to the belief that the real target was Moscow.

Above right: Slovak infantrymen advance through the Ukraine. As the Axis forces closed on the Caucasus, they entered a land of minority peoples with little enthusiasm for Stalin. While the Red Army held back the Germans, the Soviet secret police, the NKVD, orchestrated a wave of terror against their own people lying in the path of the German advance.

before the Germans stormed the passes in August.

On the eastern side of the mountain range, the river Terek was the last obstacle facing *Panzergruppe* Kleist. Elements of the 16th Motorised division reached the edge of Astrakhan on the Caspian before the offensive finally ran out of steam at the end of September.

Russian resistance was stiffening, and the German forces were now hundreds of miles past the last railheads. Supplies of every kind were running out, and a desperate race followed, both sides hurrying forward ammunition, fuel, spare parts and more soldiers – always more soldiers – for one final battle before the *rasputitza* imposed nature's halt.

OFFENSIVE FALTERS

By any standards it was a remarkable achievement, but the German advance generated further discord at Hitler's HQ. Dissatisfied with Army Group A's pace of advance, he detached the 4th Panzer army from Army Group B, frustrating an attempt to pursue the retreating Russians all the way to Stalingrad. By the time the panzers were returned in August, the Soviet forces had rallied and were defending the outskirts of the city. The civilian population had been marched out to dig trenches and anti-tank ditches, and the prospect of taking the city by coup de main had passed. For the first time, the Germans did not have enough men to simply bypass the city with armoured forces and wait for it to fall, Stalingrad would have to be taken by frontal attack.

The headlong advance across open country to the Volga was spearheaded by the 6th army, a veteran formation led in Poland and France by General von Reichenau, one of Hitler's strongest supporters in the Wehrmacht.

RACE HATRED

A vocal anti-Semite, von Reichenau left his soldiers in no doubt as to their 'historic mission' to slaughter 'Asiatic inferiors' – fighting talk that won him command of Army Group South when Hitler sacked von Rundstedt in December 1941. He did not live long to enjoy his promotion to field marshal, dying of a stroke soon afterwards. But his influence permeated the army he had led to victory for two

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FALL OF SEVASTOPOL

BY APRIL 1942 the Soviets had ferried 250,000 men into the Crimea, together with considerable tank and artillery support. But as in the previous year, the forces were committed piecemeal against the overwhelming German opposition. The Soviets were annihilated between 15 and 20 May, leaving von Manstein's 11th Army to move against the stronghold of Sevastopol.

Against Manstein's 200,000 men, 670 guns, 450 mortars, 720 tanks and 600 aircraft, the Soviets could field a mixed force of 100,000 marines, sailors and soldiers, plus 600 artillery pieces and insignificant forces of aircraft and tanks.

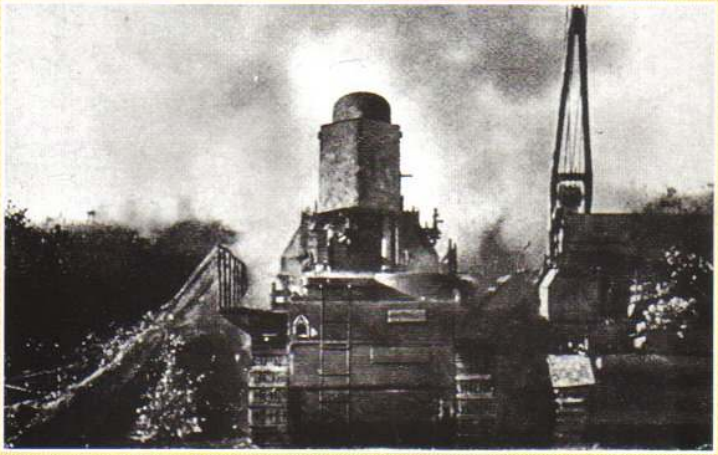
After an earth shattering five-day barrage, the German LIV Corps moved against the defences at the eastern end of North Bay. Throughout the first weeks of June, the Soviets defended magnificently every yard of territory, demonstrating a tenacity which would be repeated to resounding effect at Stalingrad later that year.

By the third week, Manstein was sufficiently worried, not only to throw in his last reserves, but to beg for reinforcements from the 17th Army. Eventually the sheer weight of material thrown against the Soviet defences began to tell. Not the least effective was the work of the huge German 80cm gun 'Schwere Gustav'. This gun systematically destroyed the main forts and the supposedly invulnerable underwater battery beneath Severnaya Bay.

The Germans finally breached the defences on the night of 28/29 June. During the next three days the Soviets organised a Dunkirk-style evacuation to rescue as many as possible of the men, women and children who had survived the 250 day siege.

Although von Manstein was awarded a Field Marshal's baton for taking Sevastopol, his 11th Army was so depleted that he would have to leave the drive on Stalingrad to the unimaginative General Paulus.

The last pockets of resistance in Sevastopol were smashed on the 27th day of von Manstein's assault. As the swastika was unfurled over the fallen city, the first stage of the German summer offensive had ended in a decisive victory.



Above and below: Manstein had guns of enormous calibre in his siege train. The opening barrage reminded some of the older members of the 11th Army staff of Verdun, 25 years before. The earth trembled with apocalyptic violence both when the shell was dispatched as well as when it landed.

Above: Armed to the teeth, three Soviet sailors pose for the camera. Naval personnel fought hard in defence of their base, and as the end approached some destroyed their guns as well as their own lives, rather than surrender.

Below: The huge Russian battery 'Maxim Gorky' was despatched using eight rounds of armour piercing and high explosive ammunition from the German 80cm rail gun. Fire was directed using a Fiesler Storch spotter plane.

years: the 6th Army cut a swathe of destruction across Russia as it smashed its way east. At its head was another of Hitler's favourites, General Friederich Paulus, whom the Führer intended to promote to chief-of-staff of the OKW in place of General Jodl after the summer offensive had been won.

The plan to capture Stalingrad was simple enough. Weiterheim's XIV Panzer Corps would form the northern flank, five of Hoth's panzer and motorised divisions would form the southern flank, while nine infantry divisions would fill the centre. They were all across the Don in 24 hours and to the delight of Berlin, Weiterheim's panzers reported that they had reached the banks of the Volga and the northern suburbs of Stalingrad by the 23 August.

It seemed that only one more heavy blow would secure victory, but the dogged Soviet defenders of the city had other ideas. The battle to come would mark a turning point in the war in the east and would seal the fate of Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich.

Above: In the six months following June 1941, the Soviet economy was transferred to a war footing. 1,500 Soviet factories representing 33 percent of the country's industrial output were moved east, to areas secure from Nazi air attack. In spite of the disruption, production had doubled by the end of 1941.

Below: German troops enter the outskirts of Stalingrad following the large-scale incendiary and dive-bomber attacks on 23/24 August. The 'final' assault on the city began on 13 September, and Goebbels' propaganda machine promised the German people victory by the end of 1942.

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Partisan War

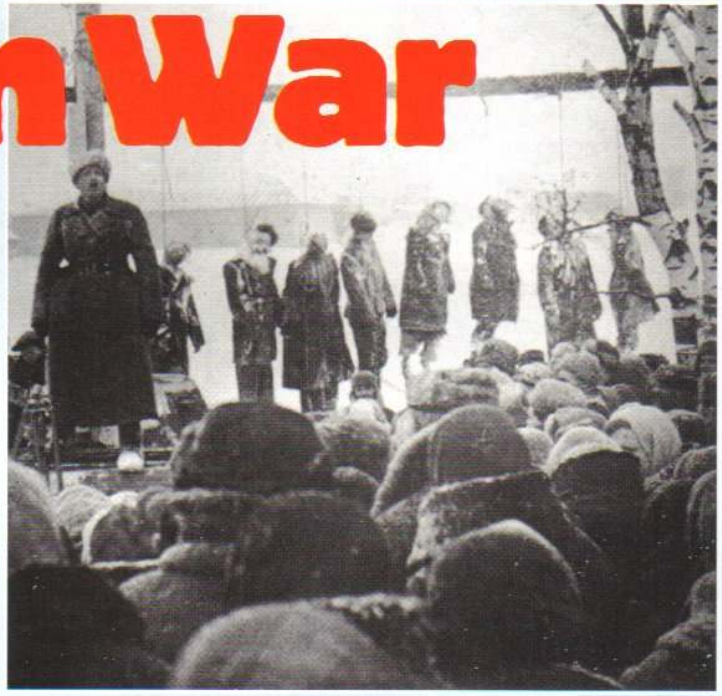
WHEN THE GERMANS first overran the Ukraine in 1941, they were welcomed as liberators. This goodwill was quickly squandered through the brutality of the *Einsatzgruppen* and the SD. In fact, German brutality was counter-productive: instead of cowing the Russian people into submission, it drove large numbers out into the forests and onto the steppes, where they joined the partisan armies which fought a no-quarter war with the occupiers.

It was a brutal war fought without any human feeling. Buildings were torched, livestock killed, women and children driven out into the snow to die. The merest hint of resistance to the Germans triggered acts of hideous barbarity, and it was one 18-year-old girl's fate to symbolise the partisan war that winter.

Zoya Kosmodemianskaya came from the Moscow Komosol (Soviet youth movement) and was caught setting fire to German stables in the village of Petrishchevo. Paraded through the streets with a placard around her neck, she was tortured then hanged, her young body mutilated to underline the lesson for the villagers. Her frozen corpse was found and cut down by the advancing Red Army.

Zoya became a national heroine. Her fate, so typical of that meted out by the German army was taken to heart by the Russians, as German soldiers would later discover when they tried to surrender, and German women would discover in 1945 when their homes were broken into by Russians bent on vengeance.

It has been estimated that the partisans in the period 1941-1945 killed, wounded or captured 1.5 million members of the German and axis forces. 21,000 troop and supply trains were derailed, 12,000 bridges were brought down and 1,100 aircraft destroyed at German airfields.



Above: "No German participating in combat action against guerrillas or their associates is to be held responsible for acts of violence either from a disciplinary or judicial point of view." Hitler's directive gave the German soldier in Russia carte blanche *to rape and to murder, and all too often he took full advantage of it.*

Right: In January 1943, 57,500 partisans were fighting in Belorussia; by November of that year the number had grown to 122,600. At the beginning of 1944, more than 250,000 Soviet partisans were operating behind German lines. They caused enormous problems for army units and contributed of the collapse of Army Group Centre in 1944.

Left and below: Many parts of captured Russian territory were only nominally occupied. Outside the main towns it was a no-man's-land, where the Germans had to use heavily armed and armoured trains to discourage partisan attacks in these areas. Even so, attacks continued, and German troops had to be ready to respond instantly.

Noted ace Adolf Galland became General der Jagdflieger in 1942. After flying an early version of the Me 262, he knew Jets were the way forward, but could never persuade Hitler to release enough as fighters. Hitler saw them as bombers.

The jet was the wonder weapon that could potentially have won the war for Hitler. But its importance was not realised until it was too late to make a difference.

JETS

Had enough of the thousand or more Me 262s that were built been used as fighters, they would have wreaked havoc among American daylight bombers. And a night fighter version would have been able to catch the RAF's otherwise unstoppable Mosquitos. Fortunately for the Allies, this did not happen.

GENERAL LIEUTENANT Adolf Galland was notoriously outspoken, even for a fighter 'ace' with nearly 100 kills to his credit by April 1943. It was he who famously asked Hermann Goering for a squadron of Spitfires in a bitter exchange during the Battle of Britain. In his capacity as General der Jagdflieger, he had test-flown the Messerschmitt Me 262 jet fighter and it had impressed him enormously. Faster than any Allied aircraft – even able to catch the hitherto elusive de Havilland Mosquitos – and packing four 30-mm cannon, the Me 262 could transform the war in the air. The Me 262 was rushed into production that summer, Galland insisting that at least a quarter of German fighter output should be Me 262s. It was an impossible demand.

Above: The Messerschmitt P.1101 was still a prototype at the war's end – hence the painted armament – but it could have been the world's first operational swept-wing fighter. The US Air Force took the project back home where it was developed into the Bell X-5 and flew in June 1951.

Right: The Heinkel He 178 took to the air under its own power on 27 August 1939, the first flight of an air-breathing jet aircraft. Despite the initial scepticism of Milch and Udet several manufacturers began to develop frames for the jet engines which were being designed at Heinkel and Junkers.

AT A DISADVANTAGE

The Luftwaffe had started the war with aircraft of equal or superior performance to any in the world. The British and Americans had since reaped the benefit of development programmes begun just before hostilities broke out, introducing a range of heavy bombers and new, more powerful fighters like the P-51 and P-47. With the exception of the Focke Wulf Fw 190, most new aircraft produced for the Luftwaffe were failures. The Heinkel He 177 bomber was prone to fires; the Henschel Hs 129 ground-attack aircraft was unreliable; while the Messerschmitt Me 210 fighter-bomber consumed vast quantities of labour and strategic materials (making a fortune for the company) before it was written off as a fiasco.

The German aviation industry was not short of talent, but the technical brilliance of its design teams was negated by leaden bureaucracy, corruption and the personal rivalries of Nazi leaders. Pre-war plans for heavy bombers were scuppered by Ernst Udet, who also opposed the development of jet engines. Nevertheless, by 1941 both Heinkel and Messerschmitt test-flew prototype jets within weeks of the British Gloster E.28/39 taking to the air.

The Messerschmitt had a conventional piston engine in its nose because its intended jet engines were incomplete (and the one it did carry failed, nearly causing it to crash on its first flight). This was the cutting edge of 1940s technology and neither the Allies nor the Germans would perfect reliable jet engines before the end of the war. However, with the Reich itself under sustained attack – US bomber fleets by day, and RAF Bomber Command at night – this immature technology represented a desperate hope. Galland was correct in one sense: several hundred Me 262s could inflict sufficient losses to stop the American daylight bombing campaign. What remained to be seen was whether such a revolutionary aircraft could be put directly into production before the problems with its powerplant were overcome; if German industry could build the aircraft in quantity before the Allies flattened the factories; and whether the Luftwaffe could train enough pilots to fly them.

FACTORY BOMBED

The second question was answered first: on 17 August 1943 the US 8th Air Force bombed Regensburg, destroying the intended production line. Manufacture was transferred to a new site in Bavaria, adding to the delays already caused by shortages of skilled labour, strategic materials and the remorseless deterioration of the railway network. Between summer 1943 and April 1945 Messerschmitt built some 1,300 Me 262s of which fewer than 1,000 were delivered to the Luftwaffe. Over the same period, combined Allied fighter production exceeded 2,000 aircraft per month.

Engine reliability plagued the Me 262 throughout its brief operational career. The Jumo 004 engine required an overhaul after ten hours and its total life was no

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Above: Willi Messerschmitt and Alexander Lippisch between them built the fastest aircraft of WW2. The Me 163 Komet's performance was literally explosive – its temperamental rocket engine was dangerous and unpredictable. Although some 300 aircraft were produced, only nine kills were accredited to the Komet. Its high speed was a liability, as target closing speeds were too fast to properly bear the guns on to the bombers. It was an aircraft of last resort.

Below: Not as fast as the Komet but much more practical, the Messerschmitt Me 262 was also plagued by engine trouble. The Jumo 004 axial turbojets did not like being accelerated hard, and they had a service life of only 25 hours. Nevertheless, the jet engines gave the 262 a speed advantage of at least 100 mph (150km/h) over the best Allied fighters, and it was considerably more advanced than the first Allied jets, the Gloster Meteor and the Bell P-59.

more than 25 hours. The exhaust cone sometimes dropped off, causing the engine to flame out and the aircraft to skid sideways into a fatal spin. It tended to snake at high speed, hampering accurate shooting, which was already hard enough thanks to rapid closing speeds and the low velocity of its cannon.

SUPERFAST FIGHTER

Yet in capable hands, provided the engines ran smoothly, the Me 262 was a formidable adversary. Its phenomenal speed advantage could be used to make slashing attacks on bomber formations, hurtling away faster than the escorts could react. A single hit from a 30-mm cannon shell was often enough to destroy a four-engined bomber, or at least cripple it, causing it to fall out of formation where less capable German fighters could finish it off. By spring 1945 the Me 262 would carry packs of R4M unguided air-to-air rockets: firing deadly volleys into the bomber squadrons from beyond the effective range of their defensive machine-guns.

During 1944 the Luftwaffe lost pilots faster than it could replace them. Daily battles over Germany eroded the overall quality of its aircrew until squadrons included a high proportion of green pilots with a hard core of *experten* – veteran 'aces' with scores sometimes running to three figures and a nagging suspicion that their luck was running out.

EXPERTEN OF JV 44

Many early Me 262 fliers were re-trained bomber pilots whose inexperience in fighter tactics often prevented them getting the best out of their machines. Only in the last weeks of the war was a truly expert formation, JV44, created. Led by Galland and filled out with 'aces', it ran up a 5:1 kill ratio in some of the final air battles, but it was too little and too late.

The first Allied jet to enter service, the Gloster Meteor, was retained in England to deal with

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the V1 flying bombs and was not deployed to Europe until the last months of the war. The world would have to wait until the Korean War for a jet vs jet dogfight. Allied piston-engined aircraft might not be able to intercept the Me 262 at will, but they enjoyed such crushing numerical advantage that the jets were never able to inflict significant losses on the bomber fleets. The Allies were able to spare ground-attack aircraft to bomb the Me 262 bases – seldom knocking them out, but inflicting further attrition and reducing readiness. They soon discovered that the Me 262 was vulnerable when returning to its base, and many jets were lost trying to recover their own airfields at very low level (dubbed 'knight's cross height' by the pilots).
The Luftwaffe had to deploy squadrons of Fw 190s to protect the jet bases as well as additional flak battalions.

Above: In the crisis months late in 1944, the German Air Ministry ordered the mass production of a simple, lightweight jet interceptor. The He 162 People's Fighter was to be built at the incredible rate of 135 aircraft per day, and was to be flown by Hitler Youth glider pilots! Vast production plants were set up at Rostock-Marienehe and in the underground slave factory at Nordhausen Mittelwerke.

Right: To save weight, the Arado 234 was launched from a trolley and landed on a skid. Entering service late in 1944, this advanced reconnaissance aircraft and high-speed bomber's most famous mission, an attack on the bridge at Remagen, was in March 1945.

ROCKET FIGHTER

The other main type of Nazi jet could only be intercepted as it landed: it was the fastest aircraft to see action during World War II. The Messerschmitt Me 163 Komet was actually a rocket, capable of nearly 600 mph and able to reach 30,000 ft in less than three minutes!
This extraordinary aircraft earned a grim reputation for killing more of its own pilots than the enemy. First flown in 1941, it was a tail-less glider with a rocket motor: the idea was to use the incredible acceleration of the rocket to gain altitude, cut the engine and glide at high speed through an enemy formation – it only had enough fuel for six minutes' flight at full throttle. The process could be repeated several times before gliding home to land. At least, that was the theory. In reality, the Me 163 closed with its target in the twinkling of an eye, faster than most pilots could aim their guns properly. Switching off the motor for high-speed glide attacks demanded great skill and courage: the engine could not be reignited for two minutes, leaving the pilot with few options if Allied fighters closed in. Most Me 163 fliers restricted themselves to a single high-speed pass from astern, before attempting the hardest part of the mission: getting down alive.

VULNERABLE ON LAND

The Me 163 glided beautifully, but was alarmingly vulnerable to roving P-51s as it made its final approach. The aircraft's skid landing gear did little to absorb the impact. Hard landings were commonplace and serious spinal injuries resulted. Worse still, the rocket fuel was corrosive, highly toxic and explosive: many Me 163s blew up as they landed. Others exploded on take-off; some in fuel accidents, some by bouncing into the ground as the Komet porpoised down the runway, others due to sabotage. Slave labourers not only built key components, they carried out some final assembly work: the Me 163 today preserved in Washington's Air and Space museum was captured in 1945 before anyone tried to fly it. Examination revealed a piece of steel placed where the violent acceleration on take-off would cause it to rupture the fuel tank, causing it to explode; scratched in the metal (in French) is the legend 'I am not happy in my work'.

The Luftwaffe was the only air force to operate a jet bomber during World War II. Developed in 1940 and submitted to the air ministry in 1941, the single-seat Arado Ar 234 Blitz was powered by twin turbojets. The pilot sat in the nose, a plexiglass affair that ensured he would be 'very close to any accident', as British test pilot Eric Brown observed when

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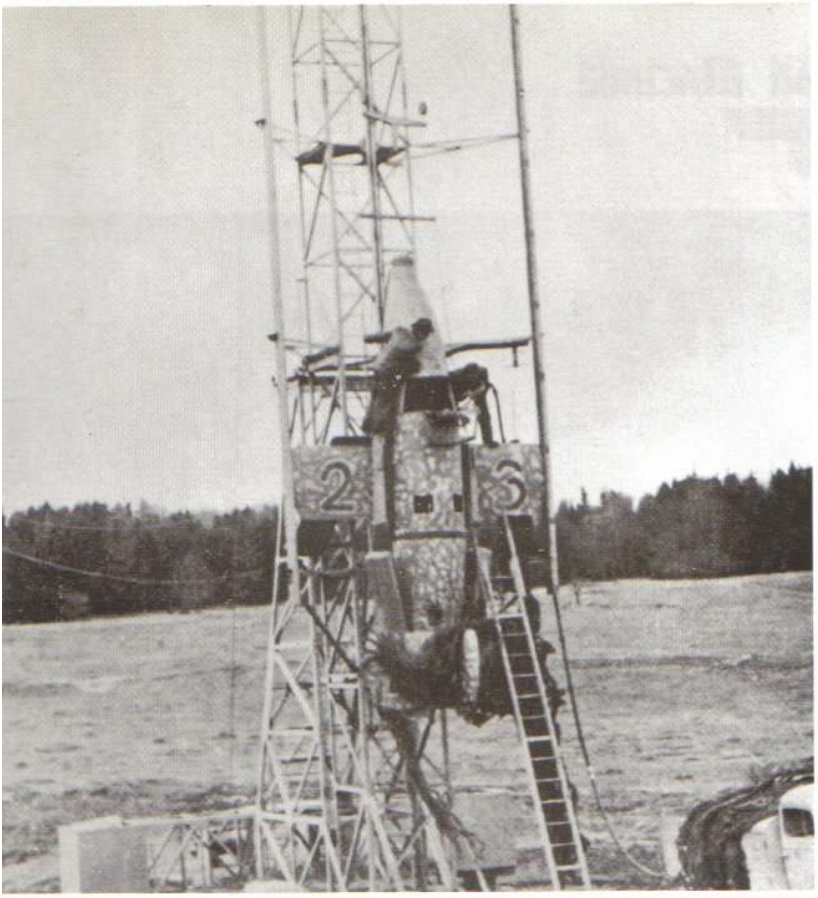

he evaluated the aircraft. The project was seriously delayed by Junkers which promised engines by the end of 1941, but did not deliver any until early 1943, eighteen months after the airframe was completed. Luftwaffe reconnaissance flights over England were few and far between from late-1943, as the preparations for D-Day gathered pace. The advent of the Arado, so fast that no piston-driven fighter could catch it, could have significantly altered the German intelligence picture on the eve of the Allied landings. But, thanks to the protracted delay in flight testing, the first operational Arados were not in action until a month after D-Day. By autumn 1944 German aerial reconnaissance flights over Britain and the Italian front had resumed, but the information was of little more than academic interest. The Arado 234B-2 was a bomber variant, able to carry 1500 kg (3,300 lb) of bombs. Flown by *Kampfgeschwader 76*, they attacked the Remagen bridge in 1945, escorted by Me 262s – the first all-jet air raid in history.

PEOPLE'S FIGHTER

The last jet to enter service with the Luftwaffe did not see action until the last days of the war. After the surrender, Allied soldiers discovered hundreds of them in underground factories, ready for action. In September 1944 Karl-Otto Saur issued a requirement for a lightweight (no more than two tonnes) jet that would be easy to fly and could be mass-produced by largely unskilled labour. Two proposals were received, and although the rival Blohm und Voss design was better on paper, the Heinkel P.1073 Spatz (Sparrow) was ordered. Designated the He 162, it was test-flown, put into production and delivered to frontline squadrons in six months. The first operational aircraft to be fitted with an ejection seat, it combined a modern-looking cockpit with bubble canopy with a single turbojet bolted on top of the fuselage. The wings, fins and nose were made of wood. The first unit to receive the He 162 was I/JG 1, which handed over its Fw 190s on 6 February 1945 and began conversion training. Not that training figured largely in Saur's original concept: by Spring 1945 Nazi leaders were expecting to take Hitler Youth members straight from glider classes into combat with the He 162. In the event, fewer than 100 He 162s entered service.

A STEP TOO FAR

A second, wilder project for a semi-disposable rocket interceptor was only stopped by the advance of Allied ground forces. The Bachem Ba 349 Natter took off vertically and carried 24 unguided air-to-air rockets in its nose. Having fired its salvo into the Allied bomber formations, the pilot would then bail out, the rear section of his aircraft also returning to earth by parachute. Ten Natters were ready at Kirchheim, but were destroyed on the ground when Allied tanks approached the airfield. There were 200 of these bizarre weapons on order, mostly for the SS, but it is highly unlikely that Himmler's men would have managed an aerial *gotterdämmerung* with such a dangerous, even suicidal craft.

Top left: 28 February 1945 – the Bachem Natter is prepared for its first piloted vertical launch. A desperation measure, the Natter was little more than a piloted surface-to-air missile. It was very dangerous: Lothar Siebert, the pilot on the first test, was killed.

Middle left: The Junkers Ju 287 was the most futuristic of WW2 jets. Its forward-swept wings were aerodynamically very efficient, but they required an extremely strong main spar, and available materials were not strong enough to withstand the stresses produced in flight.

Bottom left: The Me 262 had superb handling in flight, but its engines were prone to flame out when throttled forwards or back. Pilots concentrating on landing were easily 'bounced' and most Allied jet kills were scored as the 262s approached the end of their missions.

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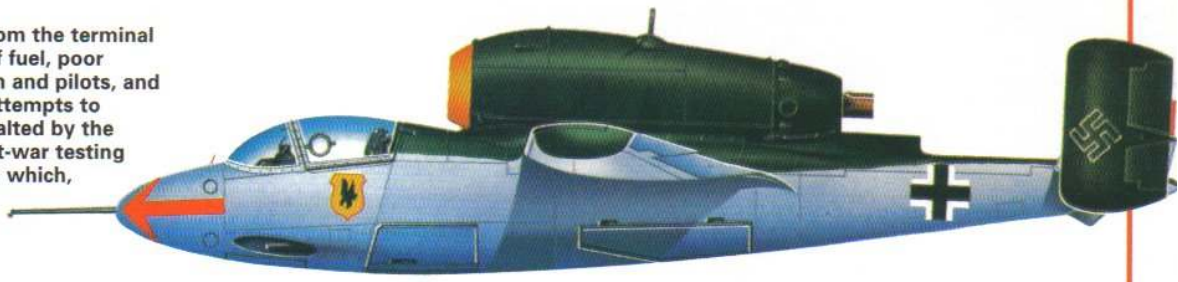
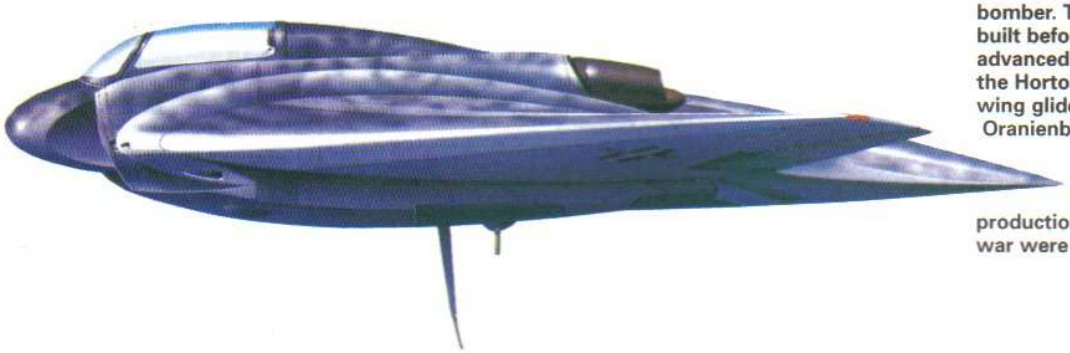
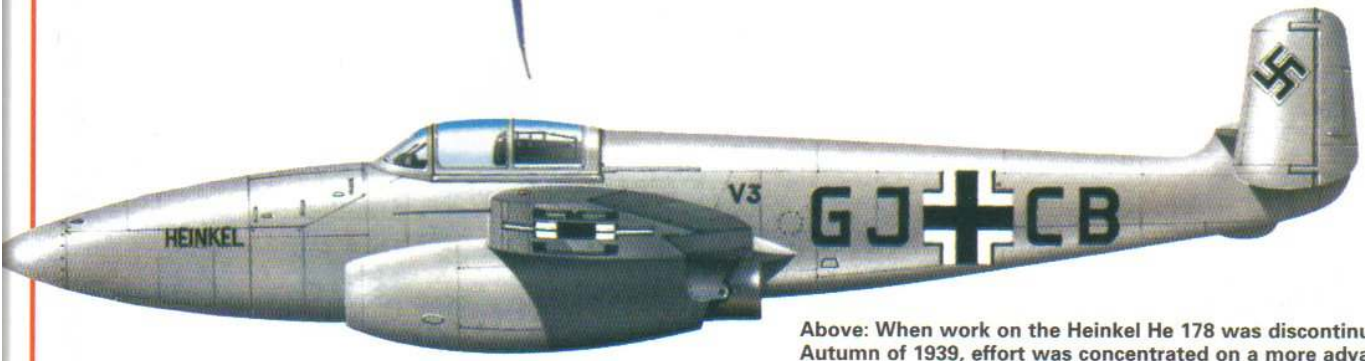
LATE NAZI JETS: GENIUS OR LUNACY?

Right: The Heinkel 162 suffered from the terminal malaise of 1945 Germany – lack of fuel, poor materials, inexperienced workmen and pilots, and hasty design and development. Attempts to overcome these problems were halted by the Allied advance. But extensive post-war testing revealed the ingenuity of a design which, though not easy to fly, would have proved effective in experienced hands.





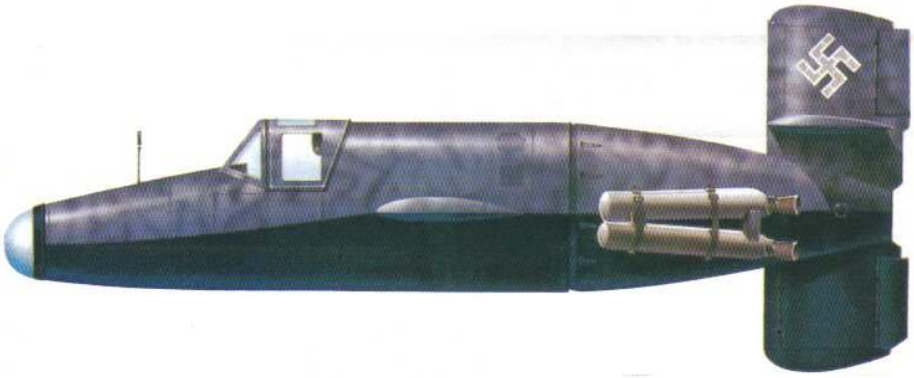
Left: The twin-jet tailless Horton Ho IX fighter-bomber. Two prototypes of this design were built before the end of the war. It was a highly advanced design, utilising the experience of the Horton brothers who developed flying-wing gliders. The second model flew at Oranienburg establishing a speed of 497mph. It was however destroyed whilst attempting a landing on one engine. None of the 20 pre-production models on order at the end of the war were completed.

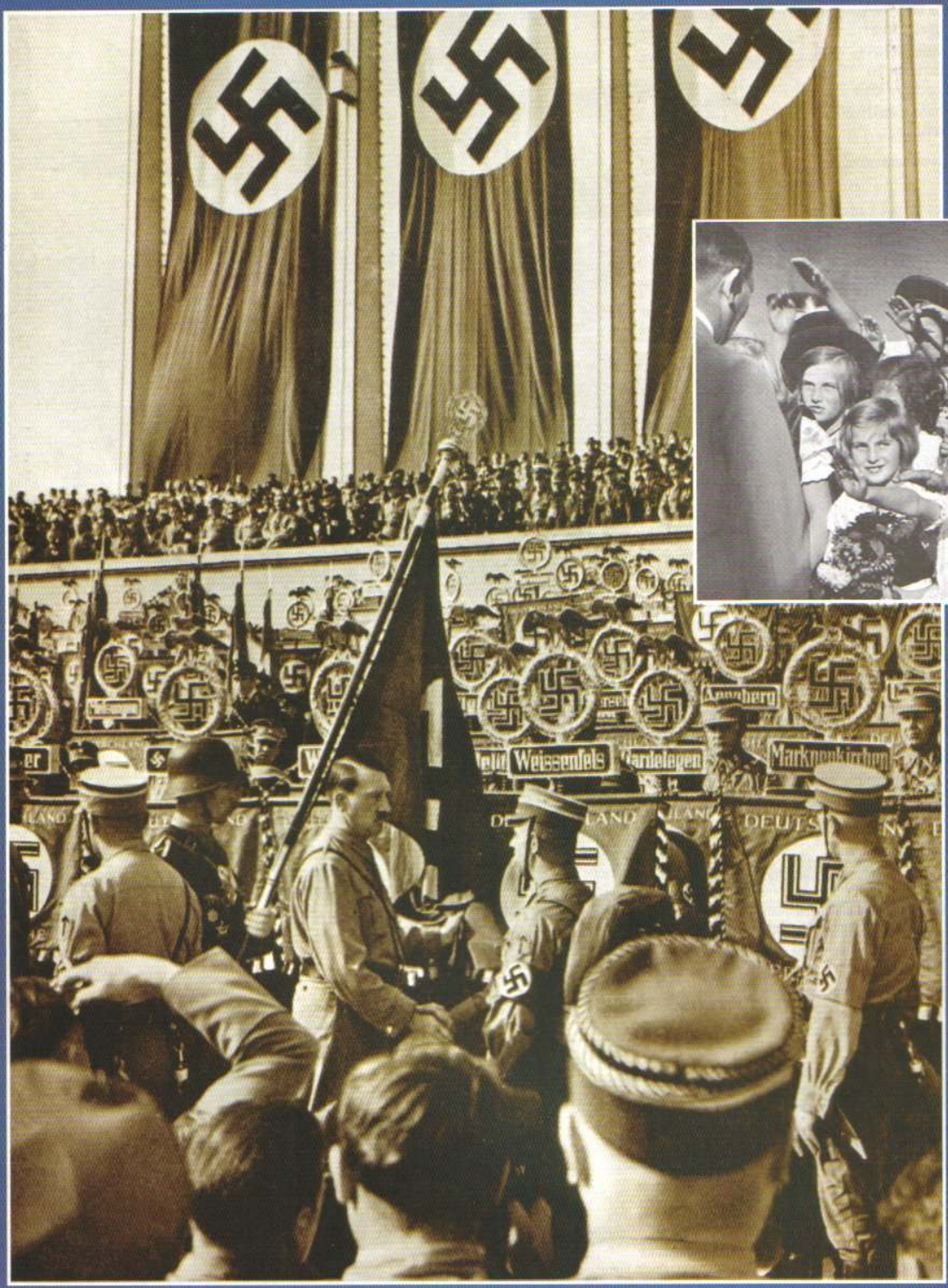


Above: When work on the Heinkel He 178 was discontinued in the Autumn of 1939, effort was concentrated on a more advanced twin-engined design powered by a pair of new Heinkel turbo-jets. After several flights towed behind two Me 110s the Heinkel He 280 – the world's first jet warplane and the world's first twin-jet – made its first powered flight on 2 April 1941. However, the aircraft was plagued with development problems and was abandoned in favour of the Messerschmitt 262.

Below: In March 1944 Hitler sanctioned the use of piloted missiles to attack high-priority targets.The Fiesler Fi 103R was essentially a piloted V-1 flying bomb. It was intended that after launch from a mother plane the pilot would aim his craft at the target and then bale out. Some early test flights were made by Hanna Reitsch. One hundred and seventy five were produced intended for use by the 'Leonidas' Staffel. The plan was abandoned in October 1944.

Right: The Bachem BA 349 Natter (Viper) was a vertically launched rocket-powered interceptor. The crewman needed nerves of steel – the aircraft would be launched into a bomber stream on autopilot, the pilot assuming manual control when positioned above the bombers. Having fired the 24 unguided rockets at the enemy the pilot would then jettison the nose section of the aircraft and bale out. Not surprisingly, the Natter was never used operationally.





Left and Below: Adolf Hitler consecrates the Feldzeichen *or standards of new SA* Standarten *at Nuremberg. Ritual played an important part in each of the* Reichsparteitage, *but the gatherings were almost as much about being a huge public holiday. At least as many ordinary Germans gathered to watch the festivities as came to take part.*

NUREMBERG MEMORIES

NUREMBERG hosted the annual congresses of the Nazi Party not only because it was an early National Socialist stronghold, but also because it was the meeting place of Germanic emperors in the medieval period. Unlike the annual meetings of other political parties, which were annual discussions to set political agenda and objectives, the *Parteitage* were primarily designed to present the party to the world – later they became demonstrations of power.

MEMENTOS

Any event with half a million people gathered in one spot is going to leave a powerful impression, and most of those attending the Nazi spectaculars at Nuremberg wanted something personal to remember them by. Ticket stubs and programmes were kept and treasured, while souvenir manufacturers did a brisk trade.

Badges indicating that one had attended one of the Party Days were also valued: they were like the 'pilgrim' badges of the middle ages, showing that the wearer had made the journey to the high temple of Nazidom.

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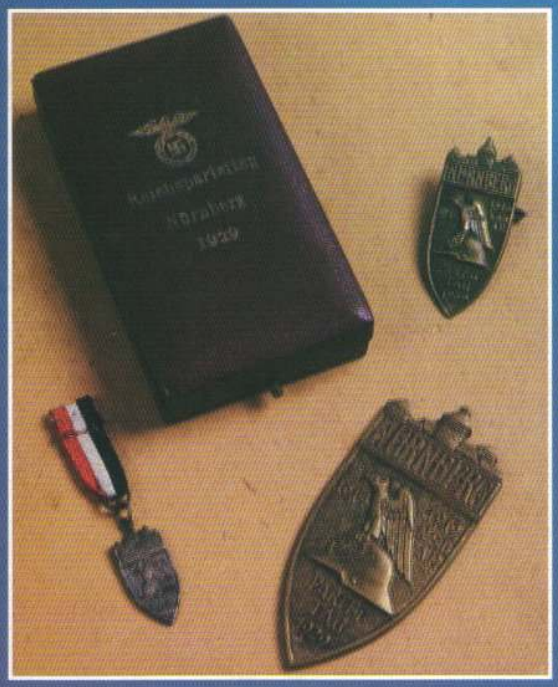
Above: Reichsparteitage *were organised to the last detail, and Party souvenirs took a wide variety of forms. The red pennant, bearing the symbol designed for the 1934 rally – each rally had a new design – was produced as a souvenir for cars, though it was also used to adorn bicycles. Some of huge cost of building temporary and permanent facilities at Nuremberg was met by donations from the public: the citation is for a donation of 50 pfennigs collected in Hamburg in 1934. The fine white card would have been attached to a present from the* Oberbürgermeister *or Mayor of Nuremberg. Such gifts would have been presented to important guests.*

Right: Most of the mementos of Party days were cheap items produced by the million. But for the more well-heeled, there was the opportunity to buy high-quality souvenirs from world-renowned manufacturers in the arts and the applied arts. This fine china plate, bearing an image of the medieval centre of Nuremberg and the city arms, also carried the legend 'City of the Reich's Party Days, Nuremberg'. It was manufactured by the famous German porcelain manufacturers at Meissen.

Below: A presentation plaque and case from the 1929 Rally together with a rally badge and a miniature. The 1929 Party Day was important in the development of the party, and the badge became an award of honour.

Above: In Germany as in other countries in the 1930s, no event would be complete without a range of postcards which those who attended could send 'wish you were here' messages to those who stayed home. The Nuremberg rallies attracted a particularly large number of card printers, who produced an incredibly wide range of products. Many of the cards could be bought in Nuremberg all through the year, but others were special editions which were only issued during the week of the Reichsparteitage *itself.*

Below: The Nazis used the rallies to impress foreign visitors. Here, Rudolf Hess has invited the writer G. Ward Price to the 1939 Party Day – an invitation which had to be foregone when the German invasion of Poland led to Britain's declaration of war.



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Above: Each rally generated a vast number of commemorative books and magazines. The most popular were probably the illustrated examples, packed with photographs recording each stage of the event.

Below: In the 1930s, each yearly rally was given its own name, and a special symbol or logo was designed to be used on anything relating to that particular meeting. This rally badge bears the device of the 1937 rally, the 'Reich Congress of Labour', and the device is repeated on the tickets giving entrance to three of the main events of the week-long congress.

Right and below: Party days had not always been held in Nuremberg. The first meeting actually to be called a Parteitage *took place at Weimar in 1926: Hitler had been released from prison after the Beerhall putsch but he was still banned from political activity in Bavaria. Beginning on July 3 and ending at noon the following day, it saw the first* Blutfahne *ceremony (held in secret), and marked the emergence of Joseph Goebbels as a force within the party. Ten years later, the Nazis were in control of Germany. To honour the early Nazis, silver and bronze rally badges were produced to commemorate the first Weimar event. The badge depicted the 'Thüringen' SA standard.*

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A-Z OF THE THIRD REICH

Machtergreifung

Also known as the *Machtübernahme*, the 'Seizure of Power' was the name by which the assumption of power by Hitler on January 30, 1933 was known. Strictly applicable only to the day on which Hitler had been appointed Reichs Chancellor, the term was commonly used to describe the whole process of turning Germany from a democracy into a National Socialist dictatorship.

Hitler made much of the fact that he had reached his position by legal means through the ballot box and not by a coup d'etat, but the process by which he consolodated that power was far from legal. The first stage was to Nazify the civil service, followed by the appointment of Nazis to head the governments of all the German *Länder*. The enabling act in March of 1933 allowed Hitler to rule by diktat. Over the next three months the Nazis eliminated the trades unions and opposition political parties. The process of 'synchronisation' saw the organs of the state merged into those of the Nazi Party, and the elimination of Röhm's radical Stormtroopers in the summer of 1934 did much to appease the Army – possibly the only force powerful enough to counter the Nazis.

The takeover was completed with the death of Hindenburg on 2 August 1934, when the positions of President and Chancellor were merged in the person of one man – Adolf Hitler.

Right: Hitler and Max Amann celebrate the news that the Führer has at last siezed power in Germany.

Mackensen, August von (1849 - 1945)

Field Marshal August von Mackensen was a veteran of the Franco-Prussian war. He served with distinction both as a corps commander and later in command of army groups on the eastern front and in the Balkans during World War I. Mackensen was a popular hero in Germany, and was courted by most right-wing political parties in the 1930s. He approved of the nationalist policies of the Nazis, and was often seen at major Nazi occasions wearing his distinctive imperial 'Death's Head' Hussar uniform. His last public appearance was at the former Kaiser's funeral in June 1941, when he was 92 years old.

Von Mackensen's son Eberhard (1889-1969) entered his father's old cavalry regiment before the First World War. Remaining in the Reichswehr between the wars, he commanded a tank corps and later 1st Panzer Army on the Eastern Front. As a Colonel General he commanded the 14th Army that held the Allies at the beach head at Anzio in 1944. After the war he was found guilty of shooting hostages and sentenced to life imprisonment, but was released in 1952.

Right: Hitler greets veteran Field Marshal von Mackensen who is dressed as an Imperial Hussar.

Madagascar Plan

One of the 'solutions' to the 'Jewish Problem' considered by the Nazis. The idea of settling Europe's Jews in lightly-populated areas elsewhere in the world was first voiced by Lagarde in the 1870s. The Nazi version of the idea proposed that the large island of Madagascar, 400 km off the east coast of Africa, should be used for as a giant ghetto for Jews. Himmler preferred the French colony over Palestine, since he thought that the Middle East "belonged to the Christians and the Muslims".

The plan was one of Himmler's more fantastic schemes, made impractical because Britain was still in the war and consequently Germany did not have control of the seaways. An alternative had to be found; a 'final' solution to the Jewish problem.

See also Secret Hitler Files
Issue 14: Deportations

Maginot Line

Named after the Minister of War André Maginot, France's main border defence against Germany was constructed between 1930 and 1935. It stretched from Switzerland to the Belgian border. The most heavily fortified areas were around Metz and between the Saar and Rhine rivers.

The Maginot Line consisted of artillery positions set in depth with infantry bunkers closer to the German border.

The line was outflanked by the German advance through Belgium in May 1940. The 400,000 French troops manning its fortifications eventually surrendered without a fight. Italian attacks on similar defences in the south were defeated.

Right: Tens of thousands of French soldiers were garrisoned in the underground barracks of the Maginot line. Outflanked by the German Panzers, these unblooded troops could contribute nothing to the defence of France.

See also Hitler's War Machine
Issue 4: Battle of France

Hitler's Third Reich – Issue 14

M.A.N.

M.A.N – *Maschinenfabrik Augsberg-Nürnberg* – is a long-established heavy engineering company based in Swabia. Originally involved in the print trade, M.A.N built Rudolf Diesel's first engines in the 1890s, and moved into truck manufacture during World War I. During World War II it was an important supplier of heavy trucks to the Wehrmacht. The company's maritime diesel engines powered the 'Deutschland' class pocket battleships and the majority of the Kriegsmarine's U-Boats, S-Boats and R-Boats.

In August 1942, RAF Lancasters mounted a daring daylight raid on the M.A.N. works at Augsberg. Even though seven out of the 12 bombers involved were lost, they did considerable damage.

During the war, the M.A.N. plant was a hotbed of opposition to the Nazis, centred around a group of workers led by Bebo Wager. Between 1934 and 1935, some 700 Social Democrats who worked at the plant had been arrested. Though the Gestapo was sure it had broken up the group, Wager reformed it and extended its contacts to Austria, Italy, Hungary and Switzerland.

As war broke out the group contemplated armed resistance. By 1940 they were collecting weapons and training. The Gestapo struck again in 1942 arresting the 50 leaders, including Wager who was executed in August 1943.

Mann, Thomas (1875 - 1955)

Thomas Mann, (1875 – 1955) was possibly Germany's most famous writer in the 1920s and 1930s. On a visit to Switzerland when the Nazis siezed power, the 1929 Nobel Laureate for literature decided not to return to Germany. Moving to the USA in 1938, he became a dedicated critic of the Nazi regime, writing and broadcasting tirelessly.

His daughter Erika (1905 – 1969) also moved to Switzerland in 1933 and formed an anti-Nazi theatre company. Deprived of German citizenship in 1936, she entered a marriage of convenience with the poet WH Auden to gain British citizenship and moved to the USA to work as a journalist. Her book 'School for Barbarians' published in 1938 was a devastating expose of the National Socialist education system.

Mann's son Klaus (1906 – 1949) was originally a theatre critic, but in the 1920s he, his sister Erika and her then-husband Gustaf Gründgens were among the founders of a political theatre group. In 1933 Klaus Mann left Germany for Paris, where he founded a literary journal and wrote the novel 'Mephisto'. This was a thinly-disguised attack on Gründgens and other German artists who through fear or ambition made an accommodation with National Socialism. Klaus Mann enlisted in the US Army in World War II and returned to Germany in 1945 as a a correspondent for the US Army newspaper, Stars and Stripes.

Thomas Mann settled in Switzerland after the war, as did his daughter Erika who continued to work as a journalist and writer. Klaus Mann, despairing of humanity at the start of the Cold War, committed suicide in 1949.

Right: Thomas Mann was one of Germany's most important novelists. He and his family were vehemently anti-Nazi.

Manstein, (Fritz) Erich (von Lewinski) (1887 - 1973)

Born in Berlin, the son of artillery general Eduard von Lewinski, he was adopted by his uncle, Georg von Manstein. Erich Von Manstein joined the Prussian Guards in 1906. He served on both fronts during World War I, after being badly wounded in 1914. He served as a staff officer under the Reichswehr, being promoted *Generalmajor* in 1936. As von Rundstedt's chief of staff he planned the German attack through the Ardennes that led to the defeat of France in 1940.

He commanded a Panzer corps on the Leningrad front in 1941, and in 1942 conducted the successful siege of Sevastopol. He was promoted field marshal in July 1942. Manstein's Army Group almost succeeded in relieving Stalingrad in 1943, and subsequently won a brilliant counter-attacking battle at Kharkov.

Following the failure of the attack at Kursk he fell out with Hitler and was relieved of his command on March 25, 1944.

Manstein was associated with the July Plotters but never closely involved. Captured by the British at the close of the war he was tried by a British military court for orders stating the necessity of "severe but just revenge on sub-human Jewry" in the USSR. He was sentenced to 18 years but released in May 1953.

Manstein was consulted by the West German government on the establishment of the Bundeswehr in the 1950s. He died at Irschenhausen near Munich.

See also **Hitler's Battles**
Issue 15: Russia 1942

Right: Erich von Manstein was considered Germany's most brilliant commander. Yet like most German generals, he could not stand up to Hitler face-to-face.

Manteuffel, Hasso, Freiherr von (1897 - 1978)

Born in Potsdam on January 14, Manteuffel was a protege of Heinz Guderian. He commanded a division in the North African campaign and 7th Panzer division and the *Grossdeutschland* Panzer-grenadier devision on the Eastern Front. He was a master of deception as well as mobilised war, and was promoted to General of Panzer Troops in September 1944 .

Manteuffel led the Fifth Panzer Army in the Ardennes campaign – the Battle of the Bulge – in December 1944. From March 1945 he commanded Third Panzer Army which was part of Army Group Vistula which tried to stem the Soviet advance on Berlin. He managed to withdraw the Army Group fast enough to ensure that it surrendered to the Americans and not the Red Army.

Right: A short, fiery pepperpot of a man, Hasso von Manteuffel was one of Germany's best tank generals. He served in the Bundestag after the war, and was much in demand as an armoured expert and a military lecturer when NATO was being expanded in the 1950s and 1960s.

See also **Hitler's Battles**
Issue 19: Defeat in the East

Marita, *Fall*

Fall, (Operation) Marita was the code name for the German attack on Greece. The last thing Hitler needed in the spring of 1941 was a war in the Balkans. But Mussolini had invaded Greece, and was in trouble. To rescue Hitler's fellow dictator, and to secure the southern flank of his massive invasion of Russia, Germany had to intervene.

In a lightning campaign, the Wehrmacht swept through Yugoslavia and Greece, before moving on to make the world's first airborne assault on the island of Crete.

An earlier operation in Greece had already been planned, but with more limited objectives. A directive from Hitler dated 13 December 1940 called for the occupation of the Aegean coast and Salonika Basin. Marita was quick and ruthless, with the Germans pushing through Yugoslavia and Greece in less than two months. But the German victory came at a cost. Casualties were low: the Wehrmacht lost 558 casualties in Yugoslavia and 4,500 in Greece. But resources had been diverted from the Eastern front, and more were to be tied down in a long and costly partisan war.

Right: German troops raise the Swastika over the Acropolis of Athens, after the Wehrmacht conquered the Balkans in a lightning campaign.

See also Hitler's Battles
Issue 6: Balkan Invasion
See also Nazi Horrors
Issue 5: Partisan War

Marseille, Hans-Joachim (1909 - 1942)

Brilliant German fighter ace who, with 158 kills, ranked number 29 in the list of *Experten.* Although pilots on the Eastern Front amassed higher scores, Marseille was considered the 'Ace of Aces' by his peers. Significantly his victories were achieved in a little more than two years, against experienced British pilots, mostly in the Western Desert.

He was an unruly subordinate – in his early days during the French campaign he was punished several times for ignoring orders. But he was a superb natural flyer. His party trick was to pick up a handkerchief from a metre long bamboo stick – with the wing of his low-flying Bf 109!

In Africa he was blessed with more understanding superiors, who appreciated his performance in the air. Marseille averaged one kill per sortie, frequently scoring five or more in a single mission Nicknamed the 'Star of Africa' his untidy good looks and bohemian style made him almost as popular as a singer or film star with German women. He was awarded the Knight's Cross with Oakleaves, Swords and Diamonds.

By the autumn of 1942, rapidly rising British air strength put immense strain on the Luftwaffe pilots and aircraft. On September 30, the engine of Marseille's Bf 109 failed in flight and he had to bail out. He was killed when his parachute malfunctioned.

Right: In spite of his short career and early death, Hans Joachim Marseille remained the top-scoring German ace in the west during World War II.

Märzgefallene

'The fallen of March' was a term originally coined to describe nationalist demonstrators killed by Prussian troops in Berlin during the wave of unrest which swept Europe in 1848. It was also applied to German demonstrators in the Sudetenland who were killed by the police in March 1919.

Originally a term of honour, it was also used used sarcastically or contemptuously by old-time Nazis to describe those Germans who through self interest joined the National Socialist party in March 1933, after the Reichstag elections and the enabling act finally sealed Hitler's rise to power. These new Nazis were also known as *Märzveilchen* (March violets) or *Revolutions-schmarotzer* (parasites of the revolution).

Right: It became politically expedient for politicians, businessmen and the like to jump onto the Nazi bandwagon after Hitler came to power.

Maurice, Emil (1897 - 1972)

Hitler's personal bodyguard, chauffeur and early friend, Emil Maurice was born in Westmoor. A former watchmaker's apprentice, he did a variety of jobs after war service. He joined the German Worker's party at about the same time as Hitler. A 'typical barroom brawler', he was one of the 'protectors' assigned to early party meetings. Maurice was not popular with the Nazi heirarchy: of French descent he was dark, and some said he had Jewish blood. Imprisoned in Landsberg after the failure of the Munich putsch, he took the initial dictation for Hitler's Mein Kampf. Maurice fell out with Hitler when he became a rival for the affections of Angela (Geli) Raubal, Hitler's niece. He was one of the gunmen in the 1934 Blood Purge who killed Edmund Heines and his boyfriend. After the Nazis came to power he was promoted *SS-Oberführer* and made head of the *Landeshandwerksmeister,* a society of professional craftsmen.

Right: Emil Maurice was one of the few people Hitler ever considered a friend – one of five or six men with whom Hitler used the intimate 'du' instead of 'Sie'.

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Mauthausen

The main concentration camp in Austria, located near Linz. The main camp opened in August 1938, soon after the Anschluss. Prisoners initially laboured in the local quarries, but as the war progressed more and more were diverted to war industries. Mauthausen soon became the hub of a large network of more than 60 sub-camps. Of the 206,000 incarcerated there at various times between 1938 and 1945, 71,000 died either from overwork in the stone quarries, armaments factories or from starvation and disease.

From March 1944 the camp was the destination of all escaped PoWs other than British and US personnel, who had been recaptured. These men were victims of the *Kugererlass* (Bullet Decree) an order that stated they were to be handed over to the SD, transferred to Mauthausen and shot. When the US Army liberated the camp on May 5, 1945, a mass grave containing 10,000 bodies was discovered.

Right: The SS used no heavy equipment in the quarry at Mauthausen: only prisoners.

Mayer, Helene (1910 - 1953)

Beautiful green-eyed blonde German woman fencing champion who would have been the ideal of Nazi womanhood were it not for the small fact that she was Jewish. She was one of the world's best fencers in the 1930s: she had won a gold medal at the age of 18 at the Amsterdam Olympic Games, and was world foil champion in 1929, 1931 and 1937. Mayer studied law in California from 1932 but returned to Germany in 1936. Even though her Jewish origins were now known – she had been expelled from the Offenbach club – she was nominated to the German Olympic team. This was primarily a propaganda exercise, designed to avert a threatened American boycott of the games in response to the persecution of the Jews. It was justified by the Nazis on the grounds that she had two ' Aryan' grandparents. Mayer won the silver medal in the foil competition, being beaten in the final by the Hungarian Jewess Ilona Elek-Schacherer. On the podium Mayer delighted the crowds by giving the Nazi salute. After the games she was happy to return to the USA where she settled for the rest of her life, returning to Germany only once briefly before her early death. .

Right: Helene Mayer delights the crowd in Berlin by giving the Nazi salute after winning silver.

See also Inside the Third Reich
Issue 24: The Nazi Olympics

Metallurgische Forschung (Mefo)

'Metal Research Bills' were a financial device invented in 1933 by Dr Hjalmar Schacht, the Reichsbank president. He created them to allow payment to weapons manufacturers engaged in secret work for the illegal German rearmament programme. The bills were accepted by all German banks but no reference to them was made in published accounts. Some 12 billion Rm of business in Mefo bills was transacted before 1939, including the import of oil and grain from the USSR. After Hitler announced Germany's overt re-armament in 1935, he appointed Schacht to be general plenipotentiary for the war economy, serving from 1935 to 1937. By that time, payments to arms manufacturers had become less commercially irregular.

Mein Kampf (My Struggle)

'My Struggle', the book that set out Adolf Hitler's political dreams, was begun while Hitler was in Landsberg prison. Volume One was published in 1925 with sales of 9,400. Volume Two followed in 1928 and a cheap edition in 1929. Sales rose to 50,000 in 1930 and 90,000 in 1932. In 1933 sales jumped to one million. The publisher Max Amann – an *Alte Kamerad* who had been Hitler's Sergeant Major in the trenches – cut Hitler's original title from 'My Struggle for Four and a Half Years against Lies, Stupidity and Cowardice' to 'My Struggle'. The royalties, even before the Nazis came to power, made Hitler a wealthy man.

Although widely read in German the book was only available in an abridged English language edition in 1939 and found few readers in the USA or Britain. The book was described as turgid and containing negative arguments designed to appeal to dissatisfied elements in Germany. Nevertheless, it became the National Socialist bible, and the Nazi aim was to have a copy in every German home.

Right: Mein Kampf was intended to take the place of the Bible in good National Socialist homes. It was often given as a gift.

See also Secret Hitler Files
Issue 18: Mein Kampf

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Mengele, Dr Josef (1911 - 1979?)

Born in Günzburg in Bavaria on March 16, Josef Mengele studied philosophy at Munich, where he met Hitler and read the works of Alfred Rosenberg. He went on to study medicine at Frankfurt. Mengele joined the Stahlhelm in 1931, becoming a Nazi in 1937 and joining the SS in 1938 while continuing as a doctor in Frankfurt. On the outbreak of war he joined the Waffen SS, serving in France and Russia where he was wounded in action.

In 1943 Mengele was appointed *Standorzt* or Garrison Physician at Auschwitz. Here, one of his primary functions was in making the selections on the railway ramp of who was to live and labour or be gassed immediately. Mengele also conducted medical experiments to test his racial theories. He experimented on the living and the dead, including dwarfs, hunchbacks and twins. He was fascinated by any physical oddity and many of these subjects died painful, pointless deaths to satisfy his curiosity. He supervised an operation in which two Roma (Gypsy) children were sewn together to create artificial Siamese twins. Mengele was particularly fascinated by the idea of breeding twins to increase the numbers of Aryan Germans.

He was held briefly by the British at the end of the war, but escaped via Rome in 1949 to Brazil. He lived here until it was reported that he drowned swimming. A grave was opened on June 7, 1985 at Embu, Brazil and sixteen forensic experts agreed that the skeleton "within a reasonable scientific certainty" was that of Mengele.

Right: Josef Mengele probably died in Brazil, but uncertainty about his death has given conspiracy theorists ample opportunity to dream up fantastic stories about the evil doctor's escape from justice.

See also Inside the Third Reich
Issue 9: Hitler's Willing Workers
See also Inside theThird Reich
Issue 13: Strength through Joy

Merkur, Fall

Plan Mercury was the codename for the German airborne attack on Crete in May 1941, when the Luftwaffe attacked the island with 17,530 men delivered by glider and parachute. This battle was unique – it was the only major campaign of the Second World War where airborne troops successfully overcame strong ground-based opposition without significant support. The 35,000 British and Commonwealth forces on the island should have been able to win, espcially as their commander, New Zealand General Freyberg, was familiar with German plans through ULTRA intercepts. However, the British were still reeling after being kicked out of Greece, and through misfortune allowed the *Fallschirmjager* to sieze a vital airfield. The British were eventually driven back to Egypt. It was a Phyrric victory for the Germans: the Luftwaffe lost 220 aircraft and had a further 150 damaged, while casualties amounted to over 4,000 killed and wounded with a further 2,000 reported missing. Following Crete the Germans never attempted a major airborne operation again, though the German success acted as a spur to the development of British and American airborne forces.

Right: Although the German assault on Crete was a success, the first full-sized airborne assault was so costly that the Wehrmacht would mount no more.

See also Hitler's Battles
Issue 7: Air Assault on Crete

Messerschmitt, Willy Emil, (1898 - 1978)

Aircraft designer, builder and entrepreneur, Messerschmitt was born in Frankfurt on Main. During World War I he studied engineering at Munich before working with the famous early airman Friedrich Harth. In 1923 he set up his own company which was absorbed by the *Bayerische Flugzeugwerke* at Bamberg in 1926. Messerschmitt designed a variety of aircraft, but the Bf 109 monoplane fighter would be his masterpiece. After the war Messerschmitt turned his hand to bubble car design and prefabricated houses and later jet aircraft design for the new West German Luftwaffe.

Above: The Messerschmitt Bf 109 was built in larger numbers than any other German warplane, and provided the backbone of the Luftwaffe's fighter force.

Right: Willy Messerschmitt succeeded in getting his designs built in spite of the fact that he was heartily disliked by senior Luftwaffe officials.

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COMING IN THE NEXT VOLUMES OF HITLER'S Third Reich

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Hitler and Wagner
Hitler's Putsch

THE HOLOCAUST
Majdanek Death Camp
Wannsee Conference

HITLER'S HENCHMEN
Baldur Von Schirach
'Sepp' Dietrich

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A-TO-Z OF THE THIRD REICH

IN THIS VOLUME OF HITLER'S Third Reich

SECRET HITLER FILES

The one place that Hitler felt truly at home was Berchtesgaden. Throughout the 1930s and the war years favoured guests were invited chez Adolf.

INSIDE THE THIRD REICH

Hitler was worshipped by the German people like some latter-day Christ. His mind was eventually turned by the adulation of the German people.

THE HOLOCAUST

In Germany, the Axis states and the Occupied territories, Jews, old and young alike, were rounded up and deported to the Ghettos and extermination camps.

INSIDE THE THIRD REICH: HITLER'S HENCHMEN

Karl Dönitz the brilliant U-boat tactician had remained a loyal supporter of Hitler to the end. His reward was to be appointed the last Führer.

NAZI SYMBOLS

Nuremberg Memories.

NAZI HORRORS

The Nazis wanted to clean their gene pool forever. The weak and enfeebled were to be put down.

HITLER'S BATTLES

Russia 1942, and Hitler promises the German people final victory in the coming offensive. But the year was to end in the bloody torture of Stalingrad.